

CAESAR'S LAST LAUGH

(A play for young people)

by PETER GUNNING.

Characters:

Bomber	(tough looking, bomber jacket, boxing gloves.)
Vocal Chords	(Shouts a lot, bit of a rogue!)
Crank	(Very cranky!)
Flash	(Confident and cool, fast-talking)
Swotty	(Very swotty!)
Time Warper	(Superhero type, wears shades and 'T.W.' in huge letters on costume!)
The Waiter	(Obedient, servile; carries a huge menu, smartly dressed.)
Tallus Storibus	(Chirpy, talks quickly)
Littlea Interrupta	(Chirpy, small.)
Julius Caesar	(Mad, loud, bigheaded, not too bright!)
Carrierbus One	(Big and strong.)
Carrierbus Two	(Big and strong.)
The Announcer	(Strong voice, blows a bugle.)
Ordinarius	(Ordinary, soldier, very happy.)
Missus Ordinarius	(Ordinary, nice lady, very happy.)
Plainus	(Plain, nice guy, a road builder.)
Missus Plainus	(Plain, nice lady.)
Manus McRomanus	(A man.)
Anothermanus	(Another man.)
Anotherwomanus	(An other woman.)
Cutus Kiddus.	(A cute kid.)
Cheekita Bratta	(A cheeky brat.)
Poeta	(A poet.)
Cassius	(Mean and tough.)
Brutus	(Mean and tough.)
Casca	(Mean and tough.)
Cimper	(Mean and tough.)
Soothsayer One	(Very upset.)
Soothsayer Two	(Very upset.)
Calpurnia	(Caesar's wife, loud and bossy!)
Neverstoppus	(A slave, never stops working.)
Hardworkus	(A slave, hardworking.)
Markus Antonius.	(Caesar's friend.)
Romanus	(Caesar's other friend.)
Octavus	(Caesar's nephew, not too bright.)
Stick	(Caesar's personal bodyguard.)
By-me	(Caesar's other personal bodyguard.)
Happy	(A happy pleb.)
Sad	(A sad pleb.)
Womanus McRomanus	(A woman.)

The Introducer (Loud, clear voice.)

(The stage is bare except for a bench which should be crazy painted, graffiti style. The backdrop should suggest a spring day in the countryside with maybe a huge rainbow running from left to right.)

Enter: Swotty, Flash, Bomber, Vocal Chords and Crank. They are five ordinary children. They sit on the bench and hold a "bored" freeze.

Enter: The Introducer. She (he) is formally dressed. She (he) addresses the audience.

Introducer: They look bored don't they? That's because they are bored. However, they don't realise it yet, but very soon they are going to take part in an incredible adventure. Incredible means unbelievable and, believe you me, if they ever attempt to tell their tale nobody is ever going to believe them. You'll see why very soon. Their adventure is going to begin in a moment or two, but before it does I'll introduce you to them.

Firstly we have Bomber. Real name Tom Drum but, I'm sure you'll agree, Bomber suits him much better. Secondly, we have Vocal Chords. She screams a lot! In the middle of the group is Crank. He's always cranky! Next there's Flash, real name Marie-Louise Gordon, but not even her parents call her that! Finally there's Swotty. Swotty loves school and she has a tremendous imagination.

So, now that you've met the gang, I'll take a side seat and watch too. Bye for now! *(Exit.)*

Bomber: I'm bored!

Vocal Chords: *(Every time she speaks she roars!)* Me too!

Crank: And me!

Flash: Wish I had something to do!

Swotty: Me too.

Bomber: Still it's better than being at school. I hate school.

Vocal Chords: I detest it!

Crank: I can't stand it!

Flash: I never really took to it.

Swotty: I love it!

All: *(Angrily!)* What?

Swotty: I mean I hate it, detest it, can't stand it and never really took to it either.

(The others relax their angry stares. Swotty looks relieved. Long pause as she thinks.)

Still.....at least at school we could make big huge rockets and space shuttles.....

(The others glare at her!) Sorry.....You're right.....This is better than school!

(Long pause.)

Hey wouldn't it be great if a time warper came along and brought us all back in time! We might get lost forever.... Suspended in a time warp!

Bomber: *(Throws his eyes up to heaven in disgust!)* Here we go again! Time travel!

Vocal Chords: You're nuts Swotty!

Crank: Time warp? Be realistic Swotty!

Flash: Better go to the doctor and get yourself some tablets. You're a regular fruitcake!

Swotty: No I'm not! It would be great! We could all go for a spin in a huge time travelling space capsule! Or else a powerful time shattering rocket... or....

(Enter Time Warper wearing a superhero outfit with a huge 'T.W.' emblazoned on her chest.)

Time Warper: Somebody looking for a Time Warper?

Bomber: Oh my God!

Vocal Chords: Is this a dream?

Time Warper: No it's true! The real thing! It is I...

(Points to the letters on her chest!)

'T.W.' I am the Time Warper... The warper of time!

Swotty: *(Jumps for joy!)* Oh goody goody goody! *(to others)* Told ya! *(to Time Warper)* Hey have you got a time capsule for travelling through time?

Time Warper: Don't be stupid! You've been watching too much television. Nobody can travel through time! But I can make time travel to you through me!

(Looks a little confused, scratches head and thinks for a moment)

Or is it through you to me? Ah what the hell! Time can travel to someone of us through the other!

Swotty: What are you talking about?

Time Warper: I've no idea, but it sounds pretty clever! Anyway enough of this talk and on with the warping! *(Shouts to offstage.)* Waiter!

(Enter The Waiter carrying a huge menu entitled "Today's Menu"!)

The Waiter: Yes boss?

Time Warper: Menu please!

The Waiter: Certainly boss! *(Hands her the menu.)*

Time Warper: Thank you. Now let's see what's on today. Ah yes... "The Murder of Julius Caesar!"

Swotty: Great! When can we see it?

Time Warper: Right away! Waiter!

The Waiter: Yes oh mighty time flying one?

Time Warper: We'll have today's special, "The Murder of Julius Caesar!"

The Waiter: An excellent choice Madam. *(Shouts to offstage)* "Caesar story!" ...Two seconds please! *(Exit.)*

(Enter immediately Tallus Storibus and his companion Littlea Interrupta.)

Tallus Storibus: Somebody looking for me? The one and only Tallus Storibus! The story teller supreme!

Littlea Interrupta: And me, Littlea Interrupta! The interrupter of great stories!

Time Warper: Hi guys!

Tallus Storibus: Well hello there Timeus Warperus! I hopeus you are wellus my goodus friendibus!

Time Warper: I'm fine. And you?

Tallus Storibus: Oh just a bit stiffus after the journeybus... the trafficus was horrificus!

Time Warper: Tallus?

Tallus Storibus: Yessus?

Time Warper: Could you talk properly? This is the twentieth century man!

Tallus Storibus: Why sure that's no problem! Twentieth century comin' atcha right on dudes! Got that Littlea?

Littlea Interrupta: No sweat boss! It's cool!

Tallus Storibus: By the way Time Warper, this is my assistant, Littlea Interrupta. She's going to help me with the telling of the story.

Littlea Interrupta: Hi there Mrs Warper! Thanks for bringing me here. I've never been to the twentieth century before.

Time Warper: You're very welcome young lady.

Littlea Interrupta: Young? I'm two thousand and thirty seven years old!

(All laugh!)

Time Warper: These are my friends, Bomber, Vocal Chords, Crank, Flash and Swotty.

Tallus Storibus: Hi there Bomberibus, Vocal Chordus, Crankus, Flashus and Swottibus! Now then if you wouldn't mind, we'll begin. Sit in the front there my friends.

(They sit front of stage.)

Take it away Littlea!

(Tallus goes to the left of the stage. Littlea goes to the right and addresses the audience. These will be their positions for the remainder of the play. They sit when not addressing the audience.)

Littlea Interrupta: By the year 44BC Rome was the centre of the world. All roads led to Rome, basically because we built them all! Times were great for most. There was plenty of money, loads of food and drink and no end of things to do. Nobody was out of work because anybody without a job ended up either in the army or building roads. Families could go swimming in the local baths or see gladiators tearing each other to pieces or slaughtering lions in the arena. There was also the Circus Maximus where terrific chariot races were held. Yes indeed times were super or as you might say 'real cool!'. It was such a fun place to be. Many people thought this was due to the one and only Julius Caesar.

(She sits. Enter The Announcer. She has a bugle on which she blows a fanfare. She is followed by Caesar who is carried on the shoulders of Carrierbus One and Carrierbus Two.)

The Announcer: Hail Caesar, Emperor of Rome! Hail Caesar, Emperor of Rome!

(She has crossed the stage by now and stands far right. Caesar, still held shoulder high, is centre stage.)

Caesar: Carriers! Put me down!

Carriers: *(together)* Yes boss!

Caesar: Carriers! Two steps back!

Carriers: *(together)* Certainly boss!

Caesar: Carriers! At ease!

Carriers: Thank you boss!

Caesar: Don't mention it! *(Addresses audience)* Ah it's great to be the boss! Everybody loves me! I am such a wonderful guy! I have made it to the top! Defeated whole armies! Conquered the world! Veni! Vidi! Vici!

Littlea Interrupta: *(aside)* That means "I came! I saw! I conquered!". He was a bit of a big head!

Caesar: *(He carries on having not noticed Littlea. In fact none of the characters in the story ever notice either Tallus or Littlea. Any time they interrupt there is a freeze.)*

I came! I saw! I conquered! I am so powerful, so full of incredible power that one whisper from me would send the gods trembling! *(He laughs loudly.)* Carriers! Come here!

Carriers: Certainly boss! *(They stand either side of Caesar.)*

Caesar: Take me home, I feel a little faint after that loud laugh!

Carriers: Of course boss! Right away boss! *(They lift him and exit with The Announcer blowing her bugle as she leads the way.)*

Tallus Storibus: That's Julius Caesar for you! One minute the fearless leader, the next a fearful wimp! But look at the Roman people... they love him!

(Enter The Mobbis, the ordinary people of Rome. They stand to the back of the stage. Even though each will have individual lines they function as a chorus. They remain in this chorus position until the end of the Caesar story stepping forward only to play individual parts.)

Mobbis: We are ordinary plebs
And we live in Rome
We all agree
There's no better home.
Plenty of cash,
No shortage of lolly,
We just sit around
Contented fat and jolly.
We have great lives,
Each woman child and man
Thanks to Julius Caesar...
He's your only man!

(They chant his name four times in football crowd fashion! When they have finished Ordinarius, Missus Ordinarius, Plainus and Missus Plainus step forward.)

Ordinarius: Look darling, it's Plainus and Missus Plainus.

Missus Ordinarius: Well hello! How are you both?

Plainus: Very well thank you. It's so nice to see you again isn't it honey?

Missus Plainus: Super! That's a very pretty dress you are wearing Missus Ordinarius. Where did you pick it up?

Missus Ordinarius: Oh I bought it at Colosseum Stores. They have a fantastic sale on there at the moment. It's actually a bit tight around the waist, I'm really a XIV and this is a XII, but by holding my breath I can just about squeeze into it. That's a nice little number you're wearing yourself.

Missus Plainus: Oh it's just something Plainus picked up in Gaul. Caesar allowed them a few hours looting before they headed back.

Littlea Interrupta: *(In a loud whisper.)* You see the Romans had conquered Gaul which is now called France and Caesar was the leader of the army.

Ordinarius: Well Plainus, how did you enjoy slaughtering the Gauls?

Plainus: Oh it was simply wonderful. I had a great time. It's a pity you couldn't make it. One day alone I chopped of ninety-seven heads. What a laugh!

Ordinarius: You lucky devil! Such fun!

Littlea Interrupta: As you can see, they were a bloodthirsty lot!

Plainus: How are the roads coming along Ordinarius?

Ordinarius: Oh fine! We've just started on some new ones in Britannia which we are going to call the M One-us and the A One-us. They are the start of a whole new concept

in chariotways. We should have them under control with chariots running in about thirty years or so.

Plainus: That quickly! That's absolutely mindblowing!

Ordinarius: Sure is! We were going to pop over to Hibernia and take over that country as well.

Plainus: Where?

Ordinarius: Hibernia... I think it's called Ireland now.

Plainus: Oh yes?

Ordinarius: But we changed our minds soon enough.

Plainus: Why?

Ordinarius: Oh they were far too clever for us. Far too many saints and scholars! Caesar took one look at the Irish and he said, "Come on lads! Let's get out of here fast!"

Plainus: Ah well! You can't win them all! Hey is that Manus McRomanus and Womanus McRomanus coming towards us?

Missus Ordinarius: It is indeed and it looks like they've brought their kids with them too.

Missus Plainus: And here comes Anothermanus and Anotherwomanus too!

(Enter Manus McRomanus, Womanus McRomanus, Cutus Kiddus, Cheekita Bratta, Anothermanus, Anotherwomanus. They are all part of The Mobbus. They meet the other characters and there is a mimed scene where they all exchange 'hellos'. Due to the numbers involved this should be underplayed with the minimum of shuffling.)

Missus Ordinarius: What beautiful children you have Womanus, what are they called?

Womanus McRomanus: Well this is Cutus Kiddus. Say hello Cutus.

Cutus Kiddus: *(cutely)* Hello, my name is Cutus Kiddus and I'm really cute.

All: Ahh!

Womanus McRomanus: And this is our daughter Cheekita Bratta. Say hello to the nice grown-ups Cheekita.

Cheekita Bratta: Get stuffussed! I hate grown-ups! Always imposing their adult opinions on our juvenile minds!

Missus Plainus: My word! She is cheeky isn't she!

Cheekita Bratta: You bet I am baby! And I can make rude noises with my mouth like this *(demonstrates a raspberry!)* and I know all the Latin swear words and I hate all teachers and I never do as I am told and I never eat my dinner...

Womanus McRomanus: Cheekita be quiet!

Cheekita: Ah be quiet yourself you...

Womanus and Manus McRomanus: Cheekita!

(Cheekita stops her tantrum and throws herself into a sitting position where she sucks her thumb and sulks.)

Othermanus: *(happy to change the subject)* Are you all coming to see me tomorrow at the Circus Maximus?

Manus McRomanus: What are you doing?

Othermanus: I've been picked to ride in the chariot race.

Ordinarius: That's fantastic!

Otherwomanus: Yes it is isn't it! I'm so proud of him! Mind you I'm not at all surprised. He's a terrific horseman aren't you dearest?

Othermanus: Yes I must admit... I am! Why it was Caesar himself who picked me to ride tomorrow. What a fabulous guy eh?

(All nod and voice their agreement.)

Otherwomanus: Hey I've got a marvellous idea!

Plainus: What is it?

Otherwomanus: Let's make Caesar a king!

Ordinarius: You mean King of the Roman Empire?

Otherwomanus: Why not? He's made us all rich. We eat well, we dress well, we have fine houses and roads, great schools for the kids...

Cheekita Bratta: Thanks a bunch Julie!

Otherwomaus: ... I think it is only right that we try and honour Caesar in this way.

Othermanus: Let's ask Poeta to write a poem asking Caesar to be our king.

All: Poeta! Come here!

(Enter Poeta, a wise old lady.)

Poeta: You called and I came

Poeta is my name

A tribute or a curse

I'll stick it in a verse.

Ordinarius: Listen Poeta, we want to make Caesar, King of the Roman Empire. Do you think you could put it in a poem for us?

Poeta: Why sure I'll find the rhyme

If I'm given a little time

All: How long?

Poeta: Not very long I reckon

Maybe just two seconds

All: One...Two!

Poeta: Caesar we love you

I'm sure you know that well

We think you are the greatest

You're brave and kind just swell

We want a crown put on your head

Of laurels, then we'll sing

'Hail mighty Julius Caesar...

Our chubby cheeked Roman King!

Ordinarius: Super...Let's learn it off by heart and say it for him when he passes by here later!

(They move to the back of the stage and mime learning their lines.)

Tallus Storibus: And so the plebs learned their lines and awaited the arrival of Julius Caesar.

Littlea Interrupta: They didn't have to wait very long.

(The Mobbus stops miming. Enter The Announcer who again is blowing her bugle! She is followed by Caesar who is carried by his two Carriers.)

The Announcer: Hail Caesar, Emperor of Rome! Hail Caesar, Emperor of Rome! *(turns to The Mobbus)* What do you lot want?

Cutus Kiddus: We have a poem for Caesar.

The Announcer: Ah good he likes poems... provided they aren't too difficult and have cute little rhymes! *(to Caesar)* Caesar, these plebs have a poem for you!

Caesar: Oh goody! I hope it isn't too difficult and that it has some of those cute little rhymes!

Announcer: *(aside)* What did I tell you!

Caesar: Is it about me? All about my magnificent conquests? Veni! Vidi! Vici!

Littlea Interrupta: He's at it again! *(mimics)* 'I came! I saw! I conquered!'

Othermanus: It's a tribute to you oh mighty one from the plebs of Rome.

Caesar: Oh super! Carriers!

Carriers: Yes boss!

Caesar: Put me down!

Carriers: Certainly boss! *(They misinterpret the meaning of 'Put me down')* You're not really as wonderful as you think in fact in many ways you can be quite a conceited little wimp!

Caesar: No I don't mean put me down like that! I mean let me down so I can listen to my poem!

Carriers: Going down to ground level right away boss! *(They lower him.)*

Caesar: Right then plebs! Let's hear it!

(The Mobbus recite the poem and follow it with 'football crowd like ' chanting of Caesar's name.)

Caesar: You mean you really want me to be king?

All: Yes Caesar!

Othermanus: It's only right!

Plainus: You're the greatest leader we've ever known.

Caesar: That's true I suppose!

All: Please Caesar!

Caesar: Mmm... I'm afraid not!

All: Ahhhh!

Caesar: No. 'Emperor' suits me just fine at the moment. Besides if I were to accept the title of 'King' then some people might think I was becoming a bighead!

(All laugh)

I might even acquire some enemies.

(All laugh more loudly)

Some people might even get so jealous they might plot to assassinate me!

(Huge roars of laughter!)

Thanks all the same for the offer. It was most thoughtful of you! Carriers!

Carriers: Yes boss!

Caesar: Take me home!

Carriers: Home we go boss!

(Exit Caesar, The Announcer and The Carriers.)

Littlea Interrupta: Little did Caesar know however, that he already had enemies.

(Enter Casca, Cassius, Brutus and Cimper known collectively as The Conspirators.)

Cassius: I'm sick of Caesar! He's such a bigheaded pain in the toga!

Cimper: He never stops boasting!

Casca: Yeah and the plebs want to make him king!

Brutus: Oh my Jupiter! Isn't he bad enough!

Cassius: Maybe it's time to... stop him.

Brutus: How do you mean?

Cassius: I mean we.... stop him! (*Runs his finger across his throat.*)

Cimper: You mean....

Casca: Stop him!

Cassius: Yes.... permanently!

Casca: But how?

Cassius: A neat little knife job... all of us involved.

Casca: Great idea!

Cimper: I'm in!

Brutus: Me too!

Casca: Where and when Cassius?

Cassius: The Senate when we meet on the *Ides of March*. Cimper, your brother is not allowed to return to Rome on Caesar's orders isn't that right?

Cimper: Yes that's true. Pigheaded, fishfaced slimefilled dog! How I hate him so!

Cassius: Right then! You are to give the signal. Plead for mercy for your brother. Throw yourself at Caesar's feet and pull at his toga.

Casca: That will look really natural!

Brutus: Yeah the other senators wont take a bit of notice. They'll just say, "There he goes again, pleading for mercy and pulling at Caesar's toga!"

Cassius: Caesar will then lean forward in his seat.

Casca: And then we plunge our daggers into his back!

Cassius: That's the idea! One by one we'll end his bigheaded ways forever.

(*They all laugh evilly.*)

Brutus: What a cunning plan Cassius! Like you all I once loved Caesar but now the guy gives me the pips! He has grown far too big for his sandals. You're right Cassius, it's time to cut him down to size once and for all. So farewell until *The Ides of March*.... and don't forget to bring your sharpest daggers!

(*They all laugh evilly, suddenly stop as if they have been overheard and exit.*)

Tallus Storibus: And so the senators made their wicked plan. However, Caesar did receive a warning.

Littlea Interrupta: In Ancient Rome people swore by the word of the soothsayer. These people were fortune-tellers.

(*Enter Soothsayer One from left.*)

Soothsayer One: Oh woe is me! Oh woe is me!

(*Enter Soothsayer Two from right.*)

Soothsayer Two: Oh woe is me too! Oh woe is me too!

Soothsayer One: Why are you woeing?

Soothsayer Two: I'm a soothsayer and I've just seen something awful!

Soothsayer One: I'm a soothsayer also and I too have seen something awful! What did you see?

Soothsayer Two: In the belly of a cow I saw... I saw... I saw a dead... a dead... a dead Caesar!

Soothsayer One: Holy Jupiter! In the liver of a pig I too saw a dead Caesar!

Both Soothsayers: Oh woe is we! Oh woe is we!

(*Enter The Announcer, The Carriers and Caesar*)

The Announcer: Hail Caesar, Emperor of Rome!

Both Soothsayers: Oh woe is we even more now! Oh woe is we even more now!

The Announcer: What are you two plebs groaning about!

Soothsayer One: We have a message for Caesar.

Soothsayer Two: His life is in danger!

The Announcer: Don't be daft! Everybody loves Caesar! You must be bonkers!

Soothsayer Two: No it's true!

Caesar: What's going on here? Carriers!

Carriers: Yes boss!

Caesar: Ground level please!

Carriers: Going down boss!

Caesar: Announcer! What are these two rat-faced degenerates doing here! They're spoiling the view! Very bad for tourism! Take them away and pluck out their eyes like a good woman!

The Announcer: Thanks boss! That'll be great fun!

Soothsayer One: But Caesar... we are soothsayers!

Caesar: Soothsayers eh! Have you got a message for the great Caesar? Veni! Vidi! Vici! What is it then? More lands for me to conquer? ...Another offer from the plebs to make me king?....A son to be born to my wife Calpurnia?....

Soothsayer One: No Caesar!

Soothsayer Two: Afraid not!

Caesar: Is it bad?

Both Soothsayers: Awful!

Caesar: Well spit it out! I'm a busy man!

Both Soothsayers: Beware *The Ides of March!*

Caesar: Why?

Both Soothsayers: Beware *The Ides of March!*

Caesar: You mean.... (*gestures throat cutting*)

Both Soothsayers: Yes! (*run off*)

Carriers: Will we get them boss?

Caesar: No, it might only bring bad luck.

The Announcer: But Caesar! You promised me their eyeballs!

Caesar: Shut up you selfish bugle blowing numbskull or I'll pull off your ears and use them for book-ends! Carriers! Take me home! I feel weak! And don't take any shortcuts down any side streets!

Carriers: Home we go... main roads only boss!

(*They exit.*)

Tallus Storibus: Poor Caesar! He soon became a nervous wreck! He wouldn't trust anybody, not even his charming wife Calpurnia.

(*Enter two slaves Neverstoppus and Hardworkus. They carry two chairs and a table. They place them centre stage and exit. Enter Caesar and Calpurnia who sit at the table. Calpurnia is sipping a goblet of wine and reading a book entitled 'The Happy Couple'!*)

Calpurnia: Caesar pet, you're very quiet. Is there something wrong honey bunch?

Caesar: Wrong? Why should there be something wrong?

Calpurnia: No reason lovey dovey! My word! You are in a bad mood this evening aren't you? What's killing you?

Caesar: Killing me...? Who...? Who's killing me...? What do you know about it? Who told you? How do you know?

Calpurnia: Caesar pet, relax! I only meant what's annoying you. Have you got something on your mind?

Caesar: (*shouts*) What are you? The world's first psychiatrist? Just stop badgering me with your questions woman!

Calpurnia: But Caesar! I'm your pumpkin pie! Your pet! Your dote! Your cuddly wuddly companion through life!

Caesar: Cuddly wuddly companion? You're a wife, not a blinking teddy bear! Now cut out this garbage and call the slaves. Get them to bring me my munchies!

Calpurnia: Get them yourself you jumped up little jerk! (*She exits.*)

Caesar: Hardworkus! Neverstoppus! Come here at once!

(*Enter Neverstoppus. He carries a bucket and a dust cloth. He never stops working. He begins dusting the table in front of Caesar.*)

Neverstoppus: You called oh mighty one!

Caesar: Yes... Oh for Jupiter's sake Neverstoppus! Do you ever stoppus?

Neverstoppus: No sir! Neverstoppus never stops! It's work, work and work again!

(*He dusts furiously. Enter Hardworkus carrying a large spade. Unlike Neverstoppus he is lazy and speaks to Caesar in a 'couldn't care less fashion'.*)

Hardworkus: You roared oh superior one.

Caesar: Yes Hardworkus. Go fetch me some wine. Oh and some of those nice little ring doughnuts with the sugary bits on top. Neverstoppus! Would you ever stop doing that!

Neverstoppus: Okay boss! But I'll have to find something else to dust instead. I know I'll dust your head. I do love to see it gleam.

Caesar: (*backs away*) Keep away from me traitor!

Neverstoppus: (*confused*) Traitor! No sir! I'm Neverstoppus your neverstopping, everhopping, up-popping, bird dropping brained slave!

Caesar: Oh yeah? I bet you've got your dagger hidden in your bucket... ready to strike me down with a sneaky neverstopping blow! I know your cunning little tricks! Who put you up to this?

Neverstoppus: Up to what oh mighty but very suspicious one?

Caesar: Oh I see! I get it now! The two of you are plotting together! You're involved in this as well Hardworkus! Tell me... what is the spade for? To bury my body in the garden when the wicked deed is done?

Hardworkus: But Caesar! I'm your elbow-greasing, back breaking, risk taking, busy faking, hard working slave Hardworkus! I've always been loyal to you!

(*Enter Calpurnia who has heard all the shouting.*)

Calpurnia: Caesar! What has got into you? Your tongue is like that of a poisonous snake.

Caesar: (*He has gone completely bonkers!*) Poison! So that's it is it? You're trying to poison me! Ah ha! All I have to do now is not to eat until *The Ides of March* have passed then I'll be safe! Caesar is too cunning to fall for your evil little tricks! Be off with you and leave the mighty Caesar alone!

Calpurnia: But darling...?

Caesar: Be off!

Hardworkus: But mighty one...?

Caesar: Go!

Neverstoppus: But dusty head...?

Caesar: Get out of my sight all of you!

(They exit leaving Caesar alone at his table.)

Littlea Interrupta: Later that evening Caesar had visitors, his old friends Antonius and Romanus.

(Enter Calpurnia with Antonius and Romanus.)

Calpurnia: Caesar! Look who's come to see you! *(No response)* It's your pals! *(No response)* Your buddy wuddies! Caesar pet, are you still mad with your little dotey pie?

Antonius: *(whispers to Romanus)* She called him pet!

Romanus: *(whispers to Antonius)* And she's a dotey pie! *(Both giggle!)*

Caesar: *(snaps)* Why are you two laughing? What did you just say?

Antonius: Er... I said it was very wet!

Romanus: And I said no it's dry!

Calpurnia: Now Caesar you've really got to mind your temper. There is nobody trying to kill you. Don't mind those silly soothsayers. They'd say anything to suit themselves!

(She laughs wildly and turns to Romanus and Antonius.) Get it? Soothsayers...suit themselves!

Caesar: That's not funny you sparrow brained spouse. Let's have less of the witty wife and more of the out of sight spouse if you don't mind!

Calpurnia: *(explodes!)* Right that's it! I've had just about enough of you and your imperial bad temper! I'm going back to mother! When you've calmed down and apologised I just might think of returning! *(Storms out!)*

Littlea Interrupta: She didn't really walk out on him but you've got to admit, a domestic row does make the story a touch more interesting!

Antonius: Well Caesar, I see you and Calpurnia are getting on like a house on fire!

Romanus: It's true what they say. You can't beat a happy home and the love of a good wife! *(Both giggle.)*

Caesar: Ah be quiet the pair of you!

Antonius: What's up Caesar?

Romanus: Yeah, what ails thee Julius?

Caesar: Oh it's those soothsayers! They told me to beware *The Ides of March*.

Antonius: Oh dear!

Romanus: Tut tut!

Caesar: So you think they may have a point?

Antonius: Well I don't wish to frighten you Caesar but...

Caesar: But what?

Antonius: Well these guys see an awful lot in those animals guts. They saw your victories in Spain and in Gaul.

Caesar: That's true!

Romanus: And they foresaw your marriage to Calpurnia two years before you even met her!

Caesar: Oh my Jupiter! You mean this time.....

Antonius: We don't wish to frighten you Caesar but...

Romanus: Have you made a will?

Caesar: A will? Of course not! I mean you only need a will if... you couldn't mean? Oh my Jupiter you do mean! You both think *The Ides of March* could be Caesar's last day out don't you?

Antonius: Well we can't be sure but just in case it might be a good idea to sit down and write that will.

Romanus: Can't be too careful!

Caesar: But I won't know what to write. I'm useless at spellings and my grammar is appalling. I was always a bit of a dunce at school.

Romanus: Nonsense! Wills are dead easy! Hah! Get it? Wills are dead easy!

(Both he and Antonius laugh while Caesar glares at them angrily!)

Antonius: Sorry Caesar, we got a little carried away! Romanus is such a funny guy! He just kills me with those one-liners.

Caesar: So long as it's only you that he kills! Come on let's not waste any more time. We'll go somewhere private and write this will.

(They all exit. Enter Hardworkus and Neverstoppus who remove the furniture and carry on a throne placed centre stage. Littlea Interrupta and Tallus Storibus stand. They will share the narration of THE MURDER OF JULIUS CAESAR. The action will take place behind them and is done to mime. For the actual stabbing scene the mime should be done in slow motion.)

Littlea Interrupta: So the appointed day arrived and Caesar along with his faithful carriers, The Announcer, and two new and deadly vicious bodyguards Stand and By-Me, set off for The Senate. On arrival he was met by the cheering Mobbus who had another little poem ready for him, written of course by the one and only Poeta.

The Mobbus:
It's great to see you Caesar
My word you look so grand
Ignore those silly soothsayers
They just don't understand
No one threatens Caesar
He's big and tough and cross
And just in case some may forget
He's still our Roman boss!

Tallus Storibus: Caesar thanked his loyal subjects for this touching piece of poetry and took his seat. The other senators entered and sat around him. All in all there were about twenty three conspirators but as this would somewhat overcrowd the stage we're only using four.

Littlea Interrupta: Just use your imaginations!

Tallus Storibus: Taking no chances, Caesar had Stick and By-Me with swords held high close by his side. He felt even more safe when he noticed his old buddies Brutus and Cassius standing behind him. Little did he know of course that he was to become ensnared in a cunning and savage plot.

Littlea Interrupta: After a brief discussion about affairs of The Empire, Cimper approached Caesar and knelt before him. He pleaded for the release from Spain of his brother. "Oh please Caesar!" he begged, "Let him come home! He misses his mammy so much! He'll be a good boy from now on!"

Tallus Storibus: But Caesar was having none of this begging business! He shook his head and said firmly "NO!" At this, Cimper saw his chance and pulled at Caesar's toga. This of course was the sign. Caesar didn't like grown men pulling at his clothes! It was rather embarrassing. He leaned forward to push Cimper away.

Littlea Interrupta: But as he did so he felt an agonising pain under his left shoulder blade. The carriers, on seeing the danger, fled for their lives! Stick and By-Me fought bravely but were no match for the twenty three conspirators. With no-one left to protect him Caesar was easy meat for his killers. One by one they thrust their daggers into his back, sneering with delight as each blow hit the target.

Tallus Storibus: Brutus was the last to stab Caesar. As he fell to the floor Caesar stared up into the face of his former friend and said those famous words. "Et tu Brute!" which means, "And you too Brutus!" Poor old Caesar was dead.

(Sound of ambulance siren backstage. The Carriers re-enter with a stretcher; both wear ambulance-man hats! They carry Caesar off. Enter Antonius and Romanus.)

Antonius: So it was you all the time you evil-minded, ungrateful, murdering pigs.

Brutus: We had to do it! He was getting far too big for his sandals!

Romanus: Bullies! Twenty-three of you and only one of him! That's just not fair! Caesar was such a nice guy!

Cassius: He was a bigheaded, two faced pain in the buttus!

Cimper: Well said Cassius!

Casca: Good riddance if you ask me! Rome will be far better off with us in charge.

Romanus: Oh yeah? Well then come to his funeral. You might hear something interesting. Caesar may have the last laugh yet!

(Off stage loud haunting laugh from the "dead " Caesar!)

Antonius: Oh and by the way, don't spend too much time arguing among yourselves as to which of you should be the next emperor. I don't think it will concern any of you!

(All exit except for The Mobbus)

Tallus Storibus: The plebs were very confused about the whole murder story. Some thought it was great fun while others were deeply upset. To give you an idea here are two differing opinions you might have heard on the streets of Rome at the time.

(Enter from The Mobbus, Sad and Happy. They stand back to back centre stage.)

Sad: I loved him.

Happy: I hated him.

Sad: He was the best.

Happy: He was the worst.

Sad: He made me rich.

Happy: I'm still poor.

Sad: I cried when I heard of his death.

Happy: I laughed out loud.

Sad: I'll miss him.

Happy: I won't.

Sad: If only I could have shaken him by the hand.

Happy: If only I could have shaken him by the throat.

Sad: My husband was crazy about him.

Happy: Your husband is crazy!

Sad: I'll cry my eyes out at his funeral.

Happy: I'd pluck his eyes out if I got the chance.

Sad: Poor old Caesar.

Happy: Silly old geezer!

(They return to opposite ends of The Mobbus without ever having seen each other.)

Littlea Interrupta: By the time the day of the funeral arrived most of the plebs had sided with Brutus and the boys. They were very easily swayed and were excited at the prospect of a new leader. Poeta even wrote a poem about it all.

Poeta: Caesar's all gone

And not before time,
Apart from Geezer
Nothing else would rhyme!
Me and the plebs
Were getting really down
With Julius Caesar
The imperial clown!
But I've got an idea...
Let's all dance and sing!
Let's party all night
Boogy woogy do your thing!

(They all swing from side to side flicking their fingers as they sing the following to a rap beat.)

The Mobbus: Julie's all gone

And we're all glad!
He was getting a bit boring...
Kinda goin' mad!
We're better off without
That all conquering dude
His manners were bad...
He was terribly rude!
We want a new leader
With no big head
Or he'll end up like old Julie
All quiet....'cos he's dead!

(Enter The Announcer followed by Antonius and Romanus. Antonius is carrying a scroll.)

The Announcer: Hail Antonius, reader of the will! Hail Antonius, reader of the will!

(The Mobbus rush forward to see the will but are stopped in their tracks by Romanus who roars at them.)

Romanus: Get back plebs! *(They freeze.)* Sit and form a semi-circle! *(They do so immediately.)* Listen to the great Antonius! *(They all stare at Antonius.)*

Littlea Interrupta: An obedient lot the plebs weren't they!

Antonius: Friends, Romans, countrymen lend me your ears...

Littlea Interrupta: We borrowed that line from William Shakespeare but as he's been dead for the past five hundred years I don't think he's going to want it back!

(The plebs look at each other in a confused fashion before trying to pull off the ears so as to give them to Antonius!)

Antonius: No you twits! I don't want your ears! I just want you to listen to me!

(They all sigh with relief then stare at Antonius, giving him their undivided attention.)
Now then, I have in my hand the last will and testament of Julius Caesar, recently deceased. I shall now, at his request, read it to you.

(He puts on a pair of reading glasses and opens out the scroll. As he does so The Conspirators enter and stand behind The Mobbus. He reads....)

Dear friends, Romans and countrymen,

When you get to hear these words, you will probably know, unless you are a real dum-dum, that I am dead! Hopefully this will be in about a hundred years time!

Littlea Interrupta: He had a very poor sense of timing poor chap!

Antonius: ...In the event of my passing, which hopefully will be pain free and absolutely non-violent, I wish to make the following bequests.

1. My palace and just enough money to keep her mouth shut about my bad moods and the fact that I sucked my thumb before going to my big bye-byes, to my dear wife Calpurnia whom I loved so much. So much more than eating cabbage that is!

2. To the plebs, the ordinary dopey twits of Rome, who probably thought they had to pull off their ears and give them to Antonius when he said "Friends Romans countrymen, lend me your ears!", I leave you my gardens and lands to be used by you as public parks. You can take your kiddies in their baby chariots for cute little Sunday strolls! You may amble through the many acres of my emperor style fields. It won't bother me as I'll be wandering through the heavenly fields for emperors in the sky!

(The Mobbus cheer and clap!)

3. I also leave a lot of money to each Roman soldier, a few quid to the roadworkers and a huge amount of lolly to my good pals, Antonius and Romanus, for helping me with my spellings and telling me how to write this will.

(Antonius gives Romanus a wink who replies with a thumbs up sign while The Mobbus cheer loudly!)

4. Finally, just in case Brutus and the boys of The Senate might for some reason want to murder me, then I'd advise them to hop on the first omnibus chariot out of Rome and head to a safe hiding place in The Alps! I give this advice as I fear that if The Mobbus gets a hold of you there's a strong possibility that they will cut you up into small sausage-like shapes and toss each one into the Tiber!

(The Conspirators look worriedly at each other and move to a near exit position as The Mobbus hiss and sneer at them.)

So friends, enjoy all the lolly and the gardens! It was great being adored by you all! I loved every minute of it! Veni! Vidi! Vici!

Your loving emperor, Julius.

P.S. Could Poeta ever make up another poem about me as I thought the last one was rubbish!

Poeta: No problem Caesar

I hope this will, please yer!...

(She clears her throat and begins,)

Caesar I'm sorry

I'm a turncoat and pretty cruel

The gardens and the money

In your will were really cool

You were kind and you were generous

Of that no-one could deny
I hope you'll be forever happy
In your Empire in the sky.

The Mobbus: That's super Poeta! He'll love it!

Poeta: Did I hear the word encore?

(The Mobbus start shouting "Encore!")

Very well then, here's some more!

(Clears throat.)

Brutus and gang

You've had your day

With your cunning evil plot

You had your wicked way

But you'd better run fast

Because we've got a plan

To cut you to pieces

Man by man!

We'll gorge out your eyes

And saw off your ears!

We'll bite off each nose

Reducing you to tears!

We'll tear you apart

Limb by limb

And cast you in the Tiber

For a very final swim!

Caesar: *(Voice off stage.)* Ha ha! I love it! Veni! Vidi! Vici! *(All look up in wonder as to where the voice came from! Conspirators seize opportunity to flee!)*

The Mobbus: Let's get them!

Antonius: Let them go! There will be plenty of time to deal with them later. Well then Poeta, that was a beautiful poem.

Ordinarius: Wonderful!

Missus Ordinarius: So full of emotion!

Plainus: Tell us Antonius who will be the next emperor now that poor Caesar has left us?

Antonius: A good question Misterus Plainus and the answer is right here on this scroll.

(He puts on glasses and reads again. The Mobbus all sit around him and listen intently.)

P.P.S. Silly me I nearly forgot to add the name of the guy who will take over. As you all know I have no son, therefore I want my nephew Octavius to have a go at being Emperor. He's a bit of a dummy but his heart is in the right place.

Manus McRomanus: But where is this Octavius chap to be found?

Romanus: Oh he should be here in about three seconds...

All: One...Two... Three!

(Enter Octavius who looks confused; as if he's been dropped out of the sky!)

Octavius: Did somebody say something about a job for me to do?

Antonius: Yes Octavius.

Octavius: Great! I've never had a job before! Well what kind of a job is it? A butcher? A baker? A candle stick maker?...

Antonius: Well actually... How do you think you would manage as Emperor of the Roman Empire?

Octavius: You're kidding!

Romanus: No we're not. The job is all yours. It says so in your Uncle Julie's will.

Octavius: That's super! What do I have to do?

Antonius: Oh nothing much! As Head of State you just sit around all day long and boss people about.

Octavius: Great, I've always wanted to do that!

Romanus: You'll have to declare the odd war – provided you're sure of winning – spend loads of money, turn up at The Circus Maximus and show us all your thumbs.

Octavius: Sounds just what I've always longed for! When do I start?

Antonius: Right away!

The Announcer: Hail Octavius, Emperor of Rome! Hail Octavius, Emperor of Rome!
(The Mobbus join in with The Announcer's chant and keep chanting while The Carriers enter and shoulder Octavius off. They are followed by Antonius, Romanus, The Announcer and The Mobbus.)

Tallus Storibus: It wasn't quite as simple as all that though.

Littlea Interrupta: No, in fact Octavius didn't do the job on his own. He shared it with two others.

Tallus Storibus: But that's another story...

Littlea Interrupta: We've got to go now as our Time Bus is parked on a double yellow meteorite.

Tallus Storibus: Yeah and those traffic wardens seem to be all over the outer atmosphere these days!

Time Warper: I'll take a lift from you if you don't mind. See you guys!

(He waves to Swotty and the gang who go to centre stage shaking their heads in disbelief. They pause for a while in a state of bewilderment.)

Swotty: That was amazing!

Crank: Totally mad!

Bomber: Incredible!

Vocal Chords: Out of sight!

Flash: Awesome!

(Enter The Introducer. (S)He walks across the stage in front of the five friends. They stare at her(him) in disbelief wondering if (s)he is yet another "Time Warper"!)

Bomber: Hey you!

The Introducer: Me?

Bomber: Yeah you! Are you... are you... are you... a time warper?

The Introducer: A time warper? Don't be daft! There's no such thing as a time warper!
(She winks at audience and walks off. There is a huge roar of Veni! Vidi! Vici! from all off stage followed by one last belly laugh from Caesar! The five friends look up in a terrified stare and hold freeze!)

THE END