

# Resource & Activity Guide



# JULIUS CAESAR

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

In a modern verse translation by  
SHISHIR KURUP

Adapted and directed by  
REBECCA J. ENNALS

Additional adaptation and translation by  
THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR COMPANY



[act-sf.org/ACTOut](http://act-sf.org/ACTOut)

# WELCOME!



We're excited to launch this year's A.C.T. OUT Tour production of *Julius Caesar*! Whether you're a student, an educator, or an adult with a love for theater, this guide will provide production insights, questions to consider, and other ways to enhance your experience.

The A.C.T. OUT Tour is presented in partnership with: **PLAY ON**  
SHAKESPEARE

## HISTORY, CONTEXT, & GRATITUDE

A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs use the tools of theater to inspire empathy, creativity, and positive social change for students, teachers, and community members. Play On Shakespeare is a non-profit company promoting and creating contemporary modern translations of Shakespeare's plays. Together we have created the A.C.T. OUT Tour, reimagining classic tales in and for our local communities, and taking no-frills, bare-bones, engaging, modern performances on a local tour. In 2024, the inaugural tour was received with great acclaim by public audiences, teachers, and students throughout the Bay Area. We're thrilled that you're going to experience this year's A.C.T. OUT Tour performance, and we hope you enjoy the show.

In 2025, in addition to our performances open to the public, on March 12 and 13 we will host special Student-only Matinee performances in the Rueff at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater. Between March 18-27 this production will tour the Bay Area, performing for students and community members in middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities. We will visit many sites in the San Francisco Unified School District, and travel as far as Hayward and San Jose. We are deeply grateful for the teachers, students and administrators who will visit us at A.C.T. or welcome us to their campus, and to all funders, donors, ticket buyers and supporters who enable us to take the show on the road at no cost to the school and community sites where we perform.

## THIS GUIDE

Created for the A.C.T. OUT Tour in February 2025 by the A.C.T. Education and Community Programs team:

Editor	Natalie Greene
Content creation	Rebecca Ennals & Natalie Greene with additional materials from Michaela Goldhaber and Amanda Giguere
Design	Dani Karonis

Reach out to us at [education@act-sf.org](mailto:education@act-sf.org) with questions, feedback, and support needs. For a full PDF version with click-able links, visit [this link](#).

**"Men at some point are masters of their fate"**

**"Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war"**

— William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

# CONTENTS

Click the title to be transported there

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
<b>INTRODUCTIONS</b>		
<b>About Our Production</b>	Basic information including central themes, content warning, and questions for preparation or reflection	4
<b>A note from the Director</b>	From <i>Julius Caesar</i> Director & A.C.T. OUT Tour Co-Producer Rebecca J. Ennals	5
<b>A note from the Producer</b>	From <i>Julius Caesar</i> Producer & Director of A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs Natalie Greene	6
<b>GAMES and ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>WHAT'S SHAKING? Historical Context &amp; More</b>	Basic Shakespeare History, Discussion Questions, and Introduction to Verse, Prose & Iambic Pentameter	7
<b>Character &amp; Synopsis Game</b>	If you only have time for one game or activity to prepare for this show, we recommend this!	10
<b>Anticipation Guide</b>	Activate some of the show's core themes with discussion, including variations for written or embodied work	13
<b>What is a "Translation" of Shakespeare?</b>	Compare the original vs. translated text, and explore creating your own translation	15
<b>After The Show</b>	Discussion questions to activate after seeing the play	16
<b>APPENDIX</b>		
<b>Preventing Youth Suicide</b>	Quick facts and various suicide prevention resources	17
<b>Video introductions</b>	Brush up on the play's content, characters, themes and more, using these short animated videos	19
<b>Additional Shakespeare Resources</b>	Videos about Play On translations, Shakespeare's invented words, as well as the company and the approach that inspired our tour	20
<b>Logistics and Reminders</b>	Helpful information for all audiences, schools & community partners	21
<b>Production Credits</b>	A full list of the cast as well as production and creative team members	22
<b>National Arts Standards + Special Thanks</b>	See how the content in this Guide fulfills National Arts Standards	24

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## ABOUT OUR PRODUCTION

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*Julius Caesar* contains some of the most memorable language in Shakespeare, not to mention detailed characterizations and deep explorations of human relationships. Shishir Kurup's translation preserves all of Shakespeare's magnificent rhetoric while making obscure humor and historical references more accessible. Seven dynamic actors bring this story to life in a tight 90-minute adaptation, performed in the round with exciting audience interactions.

We have just been through one of the most tumultuous election seasons in recent memory—including violence, polarization, and real-life reminders of how voters can change their minds based on rhetoric and communication strategies. Against this backdrop, the A.C.T. OUT Tour's production of *Julius Caesar* asks the following questions:

- **Does the good of the many rank higher than the good of the individual?**
- **Is political violence justifiable, and if so, when?**
- **How can words be used to inspire action?**
- **Is democracy the best/most effective system of government? Who should govern?**
- **What loyalty do we owe our friends and partners?**
- **Do the ends justify the means?**

### CONSIDER FOR STUDENTS:

- Which themes are familiar to you?
- What assumptions come to mind when you think about these themes?
- What do these themes inspire or help you to imagine?

### CONSIDER FOR EDUCATORS:

- How might these themes connect to existing curriculum or classwork?
- How might these themes support your social-emotional learning goals?
- How can you support your students to safely explore these themes?

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## CONTENT WARNING

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This performance includes depictions of violence, crowd brutality, suicides, and battles, and is recommended for mature middle and high school students and adult audiences.

### CONSIDER FOR STUDENTS:

- Are there specific things you're nervous about?
- Are there specific things you're excited about?
- Do you have personal experiences with any of these issues?
  - If so, can you think of any way you might need support, preparation, or follow up?
  - Please let your teacher know!

### CONSIDER FOR EDUCATORS:

- Do any of your students have experience with one or more of these issues? What types of preparation or follow up would best support them? For example:
  - Does a student need a heads up about some content, so they can be emotionally prepared for it?
  - Does a student need to sit on the aisle so they can leave the performance space if needed?
  - Would they benefit from a personal follow up after the show?
- Are there specific ways you need to prepare or fortify yourself, as you guide students through this experience?



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## A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR REBECCA J. ENNALS

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I'm honored to be back for a second year as co-producer and director of the A.C.T. OUT Tour, working with many of the same artists who made our first foray such a success. The enthusiastic reception of *Measure for Measure* was immensely gratifying for so many reasons—not the least of which was to see how audiences, especially students, responded to material that respects their intelligence, acknowledges their experience of the world, and engages them with challenging questions. I'm also extremely grateful for our partners at Play On for their support of this model of small, portable, engagement-focused Shakespeare.

We chose *Julius Caesar* last summer early in what would be a roller coaster ride of an election season. We expected to explore the rise of fascism in a democracy and the consequences of having a deeply divided state. We had just seen an assassination attempt against a presidential candidate. We did NOT foresee that the assassination of a healthcare CEO would capture the public's attention, raising questions around whether such an act is ever justifiable. We also could not know the outcome of the election...and when we did, it felt right to cast the show in a way that shows female politicians once again forced to reckon with an impenetrable ceiling. A female Brutus's caution about putting herself on the line for her country feels deeply understandable, given the stakes. Cassius's bitterness also hits differently when we hear her being body shamed and told to smile more. The people of Rome seem happy to accept a turn toward fascism as long as it is couched in a fun party, a stimulus check, and a rousing speech. History is cyclical. As I write this, we are in the first few weeks of the new administration—how quickly things can change. Perhaps thinking about the Roman Empire daily is not such a bad idea.

We recognize that Shakespeare's text can be a barrier to access for many, and we're grateful for Shishir's translation that both preserves the speeches and phrases that have become part of our common culture, and gives us updated language to make the action more clear. Play On's incredible work in matching living playwrights with these 400-year-old plays breathes new life into the language, allowing audiences to dive right in. Always, we owe a debt to Michelle Hensley and the work of Ten Thousand Things in Minneapolis, who for the last 30 years have led the way in creating community touring productions. We continue to find great joy in restricting our playground to just a few physical things...and letting the words and the actors do the rest.

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## A NOTE FROM FROM PRODUCER NATALIE GREENE

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Conspiracy, political upheaval, fierce division around a cult of personality, and anxiety over a succession of leadership...are these the issues of ancient Rome? Elizabethan England? Contemporary America? Or all that and more? *Julius Caesar*, as a historical figure, and *Julius Caesar*, as a play, have each wound their way through centuries, cultures, and curricula because the issues and questions they provoke are still important and still problematic today. As we prepared for this production, I was moved to read an essay by James Baldwin that beautifully captures the resonance and universality of this story. In his 1964 essay titled "Why I Stopped Hating Shakespeare," Baldwin wrote:

"I still remember my shock when I finally heard these lines from the murder scene in *Julius Caesar*. The assassins are washing their hands in Caesar's blood. Cassius says:

*Stoop then, and wash. — How many ages hence  
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,  
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!*

What I suddenly heard, for the first time, was manifold. It was the voice of lonely, dedicated, deluded Cassius, whose life had never been real for me before—I suddenly seemed to know what this moment meant to him. But beneath and beyond that voice I also heard a note yet more rigorous and impersonal—and contemporary: that 'lofty scene,' in all its blood and necessary folly, its blind and necessary pain, was thrown into a perspective which has never left my mind. Just so, indeed, is the heedless State overthrown by men, who, in order to overthrow it, have had to achieve a desperate single-mindedness. And this single-mindedness, which we think of (why?) as ennobling, also operates, and much more surely, to distort and diminish a man—to distort and diminish us all, even, or perhaps especially, those whose needs and whose energy made the overthrow of the State inevitable, necessary, and just."

As artists and as educators, it is a privilege to shine light on these nuanced issues and sit down for conversations with audiences of all ages, as we grapple with the relevance of *Julius Caesar* today. Thank you for being here, and please consider sticking around after the show to tell us what you think.

—Natalie Greene, Director of Education & Community Programs

# WHAT'S SHAKING? HISTORICAL

## CONTEXT & MORE

### WHAT'S SHAKING? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear you're going to see a play by Shakespeare? Why do you think that?
- What plays by Shakespeare have you seen or heard of? Which ones have you read? What movie adaptations have you seen? What did you think of them?
- Do you have a favorite play, character or quotes by Shakespeare? If so, why is it your favorite?

### SHAKESPEARE—WHO IS THAT?

Activate this as a lecture, a quiz, or (our favorite) a trivia contest!

**Q: When did Shakespeare live?**

A: 1564-1616

**Q: Where did Shakespeare live?**

A: Stratford-upon-Avon and London, England

**Q: How many plays did Shakespeare write?**

A: Thirty-nine plays (including collaborations with John Fletcher and others). He produced an average of two plays a year for almost twenty years.

**Q: What did Shakespeare's family do?**

A: His father, John Shakespeare, made gloves. His mother, Mary Arden, grew up on a farm.

**Q: Did Shakespeare go to college?**

A: There is no record of him attending university. He attended a Grammar School that was available to all boys within his district, free of charge. He would have studied spoken and written Latin, classical authors, and drama.

**Q: Was Shakespeare just a playwright?**

A: He was also an actor and part of theater management.

**Q: What was Shakespeare's company called?**

A: The Lord Chamberlain's Men, and then the King's Men after James I became their patron.



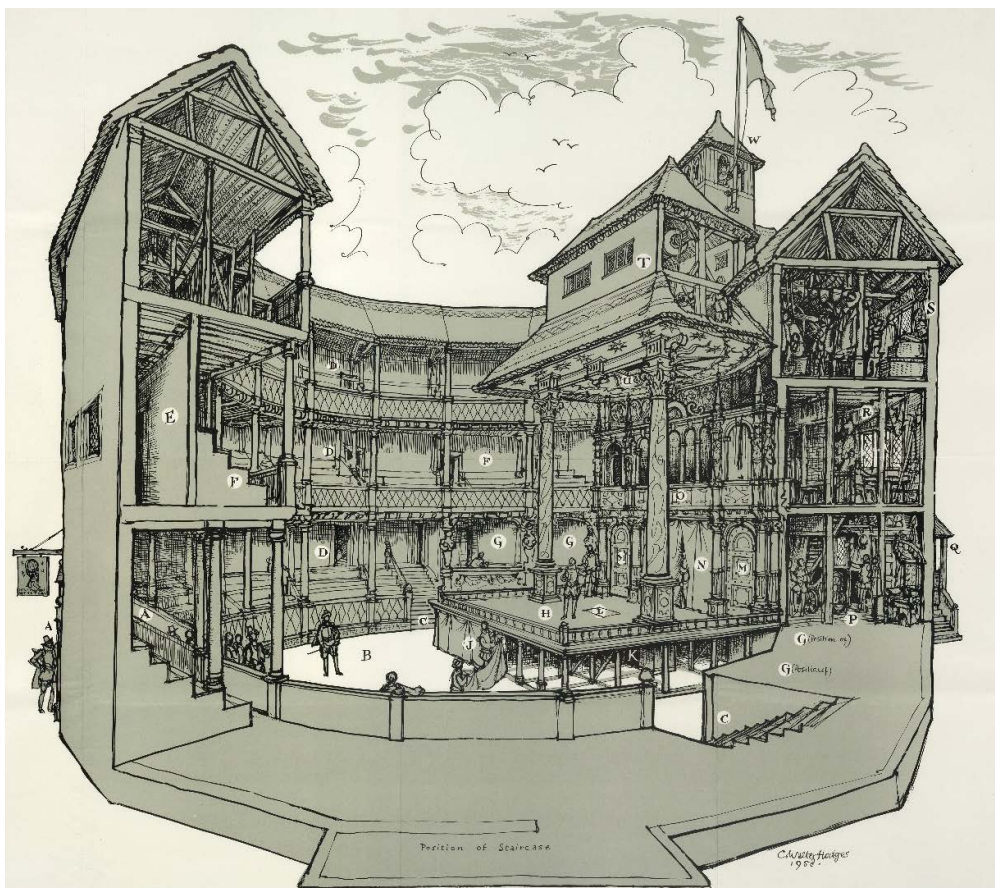
Stratford-upon-Avon and London, England

**Q: Did the Lord Chamberlain's Men have their own theater?**

A: Yes, The Globe Theater, an open-air theater with audience on three sides, where for a penny, people (called "groundlings") would stand on the rush-strewn earthen floor to watch the performance. There were seats for those who could pay more. The Globe was owned by several actor-shareholders, including Shakespeare.

**Q: How many words did Shakespeare add to the English language?**

A: Shakespeare is credited with the invention or introduction of over 1,700 words and phrases that are still used in English today. Some of the words and phrases that Shakespeare introduced are bedazzled, critic, eventful, eyeball, good riddance, majestic, and swagger. [You can find more here.](#)



**Discussion question:** What words and phrases have been added to the English language in your lifetime?

**Q: Did Shakespeare write in verse or prose?**

A: Shakespeare wrote in both verse and prose, usually alternating within the same play.

**Q: What is the difference between them?**

A: Prose is any written work that follows a basic grammatical structure (words and phrases arranged into sentences and paragraphs.) Verse is language arranged with a metric rhythm.

**Prose sample from *Julius Caesar*:**

CASKA: I might as well be hanged as tell how it played out. It was pure theatre! I barely paid attention. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown- yet not a crown, really, 'twas one of these laurels - and as I mentioned, he put it by once; but I felt he would gladly have had it. So Antony offered it to him again; and he put it by again. And again I felt, he was quite loathe to lay his digits off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it by the third time; and still as he refused it the rabble roared, and clapped their rough hands, and threw up their sweaty caps, and let out such a cloud of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it clearly choked Caesar, for he fainted and fell down at it. And as for myself, I didn't dare laugh...for fear of opening my lips and inhaling the bad air.



**Verse sample from Julius Caesar:**

BRUTUS

What is this roaring? I fear that the people  
Choose Caesar for their king.

CASSIUS

Ah, do you fear it?  
Then I should think you would not have it so.

BRUTUS

I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.  
For what do you detain me here so long?  
If it pertains towards the general good,  
Set honor in one eye, in death the other,  
And I will look on both indifferently.

**Potential Assignment:** When you see *Julius Caesar*, listen to the language to figure out when the characters are speaking verse and when they are speaking prose. Why does it shift? Are there characters who only speak in one or the other?

**Q: What kind of verse did Shakespeare use?**

A: Shakespeare wrote in iambic pentameter. Most Western poetry is measured in feet that consist of 2 beats. An iamb is a foot of poetry that has an unstressed beat followed by a stressed beat. Ba-BUM. Pentameter refers to a line of poetry that is 5 feet long, which equals 10 beats. A regular line of iambic pentameter is Ba-BUM Ba-BUM Ba-BUM Ba-BUM Ba-BUM, which can be compared with the regular rhythm of a beating human heart.

**Iambic Pentameter sample from *Julius Caesar*:** These lines, in beautiful iambic pentameter, are from Mark Antony's famous soliloquy. Find the rhythm while reading them aloud or in your mind, by beating a heartbeat on your chest with your hand:

O pardon me, you bleeding piece of earth,  
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers.  
You are the ruins of the noblest man  
That ever lived within the scope of time.

**Potential Assignment:** Write two or more lines in iambic pentameter. Then perform the lines for the class, or "direct an actor" (have a peer read the lines, and coach them on how they lines should be performed).

# CHARACTER AND SYNOPSIS GAME

## STEP 1: PREPARE SOUNDS AND GESTURES FOR EACH CHARACTER

Print or write the following character names on one side of an index card or piece of paper, and the brief descriptions on the other. Give each participant a card, and ask them to come up with a sound and a gesture for their character based on what it says about them. The sound can be a single word or just a sound, but it should not be a phrase. If you have extra students, a pair of shyer students can team up!

<b>JULIUS CAESAR</b>	<b>TRIUMPHANT MILITARY LEADER AND DICTATOR OF ROME</b>
<b>BRUTUS</b>	<b>LEADER OF REBELLION AGAINST CAESAR</b>
<b>CASSIUS</b>	<b>LEADER OF REBELLION AGAINST CAESAR</b>
<b>CASKA</b>	<b>A CONSPIRATOR &amp; ASSASSIN</b>
<b>DECIUS</b>	<b>A CONSPIRATOR &amp; ASSASSIN</b>
<b>TREBONIUS</b>	<b>A CONSPIRATOR &amp; ASSASSIN</b>
<b>CINNA</b>	<b>A CONSPIRATOR &amp; ASSASSIN</b>
<b>PORTIA</b>	<b>BRUTUS' WIFE</b>
<b>CALPHURNIA</b>	<b>CAESAR'S WIFE</b>
<b>MARK ANTONY</b>	<b>GENERAL AND FRIEND OF CAESAR, LEADER OF OPPOSITION TO THE REBELS</b>
<b>OCTAVIUS CAESAR</b>	<b>WITH ANTONY, LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION TO THE REBELS</b>
<b>LEPIDUS</b>	<b>WITH ANTONY, LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION TO THE REBELS</b>
<b>CINNA THE POET</b>	<b>MISTAKEN FOR CINNA THE CONSPIRATOR</b>
<b>SOOTHSAYER</b>	<b>PREDICTS THE DEATH OF CAESAR</b>
<b>THE CONSPIRATORS</b>	<b>PLAYED BY THE WHOLE CLASS</b>
<b>THE CROWD</b>	<b>PLAYED BY THE WHOLE CLASS</b>

## STEP 2: Prepare sounds and gestures for each location

As a group, decide on a sound and gesture for each of the following locations:

**The Capital**

**Brutus' Orchard**

**Caesar's Palace**

**The battlefield at Philippi**

## STEP 3: Play the game!

Explain that you're going to read the following synopsis out loud, and that every time you read a name or a place, they should make their sound and do their gesture. For the places, EVERYONE should make the sound and gesture together. Read the synopsis below, and encourage participation!

## STEP 4: Debrief

Afterwards, ask them about the experience. Did their sounds and gestures change at all as they learned more about what was happening to the characters? Did they find themselves acting and reacting to other characters based on their relationship in the story? What were their favorite parts? What surprised them?

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## SYNOPSIS OF *JULIUS CAESAR*

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**Julius Caesar**, returning victorious to Rome from foreign wars, is escorted to **the Capitol** by an enthusiastic **Crowd** for a public celebration. On the way, he is warned by a **soothsayer** to “beware the Ides of March.”

A group of **conspirators**, headed by **Cassius**, is disturbed by the power **Caesar** has gained and the idea that he might seize total control of the government. To help their cause, **Cassius** attempts to persuade **Brutus**, a good friend of **Caesar** and well-known for his honesty, that the welfare of Rome demands **Caesar’s** death. Soon, another conspirator **Caska** returns from the celebration and says that **Mark Antony** has offered **Caesar** the crown three times and that three times **Caesar** refused. **Brutus** promises that he will consider joining the conspiracy.

Later, **Casca** meets **Cassius** on the street, afraid because many unusual events are happening. The sky is raining fire, and animals are walking in the street. **Cassius** says that it is a sign that the mighty **Caesar** will fall.

That night, in **Brutus’ orchard**, a tormented **Brutus** debates with himself whether to join the conspiracy. His fear that Rome may lose its freedom wins out over his admiration for **Caesar**, and at last he agrees to join with **Cassius** and the others including **Decius**, **Cinna**, **Caska**, and **Trebonius**, to assassinate **Caesar** the next day. When the conspirators leave, his wife **Portia** demands to know what is going on, because she is worried about how withdrawn he has been..

The next morning is March 15, the Ides of March. At **Caesar’s Palace**, **Calphurnia**, **Caesar’s** wife, complains that she has had frightful dreams and has heard of evil omens. She urges her husband to avoid danger and stay home from the senate that day. After arguing that he will appear weak and frightened by staying home, **Caesar** finally gives into his wife and consents to staying with her. The conspirator **Decius**, however, come to his house, acting as friend and supporter, and succeeds in inducing him to accompany them, instead, to the capitol.

In the **Capitol**, the conspirators surround **Caesar** on the pretext of discussing business with him—and each, in turn, stabs him. Seeing **Brutus’s** thrust, **Caesar** exclaims “et tu, Brute” (you too, Brutus) and dies [*die dramatically!*]. **Mark Antony**, **Caesar’s** friend, confronts the **Conspirators**; and they seem to convince him that their actions were right, and they agree that **Antony** may speak at the funeral, as long as he does not condemn the Conspirators. But once alone, **Antony** vows revenge to the audience.

**Brutus** speaks first at the funeral and convinces the **Crowd**, saying that love of Rome alone made the murder necessary, a sentiment which is hailed with enthusiasm by the **Crowd**. **Antony** follows, praising **Caesar**, while calling **Brutus** and the **Conspirators** “honorable men.” He so cleverly twists the argument, without blaming the conspirators, that the crowd, a moment before cheering **Brutus**, turns in anger against the **Conspirators**, who are forced to flee from the city. Indeed things become so chaotic that a **poet named Cinna**, who had nothing to do with **Caesar’s** death, is killed by the crowd [*die dramatically!*] just because his name is the

same as one of the **Conspirators**. Many of the **Conspirators** are also killed in the aftermath of the funeral [*die dramatically*].

In Rome, the ruling triumvirate of **Antony**, **Octavius**, and **Lepidus** formed after **Caesar's** death plot revenge and organize a military force to fight the armies of **Brutus** and **Cassius**. The opposing armies gather on the **battlefield of Phillipi**.

Meanwhile, the relationship between **Cassius** and **Brutus** has deteriorated into an open quarrel. After the argument is settled, **Brutus** confides to **Cassius** that his wife, **Portia**, has committed suicide [*die dramatically*]. Later that night, unable to sleep, **Brutus** is stunned to see **Caesar's** ghost, who warns that he will meet him again at the **battlefield of Phillippi**.

That morning the armies meet and the forces of the triumvirate are victorious. Unwilling to endure defeat and dishonor, both **Cassius** and **Brutus** kill themselves [*die dramatically*]. **Antony** calls **Brutus** "the noblest Roman of them all," since he was the only conspirator whose motive was not envy of the powerful **Caesar**, but the greater good of Rome.

**OPTIONAL DEBRIEF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- How was that? What parts stood out to you?
- What parts of the story do you still have questions about?
- What were your favorite things? What are you most looking forward to when you see the show?



"The Assassination of Julius Caesar" by Heinrich Füger



# ANTICIPATION GUIDE - INSTRUCTIONS

This lesson was developed by Amanda Giguere from the **Colorado Shakespeare Festival** (CSF), and is reprinted here with permission and gratitude. CSF partners with CU Boulder's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence and the Department of Theatre & Dance to create an interdisciplinary program that increases awareness of **Shakespeare and violence prevention**.

RATIONALE:	OBJECTIVE:	INSTRUCTIONS:
This mini-lesson will introduce students to some key themes from our production of <i>Julius Caesar</i> .	Students will be able to discuss and defend their opinions about key themes and ideas related to <i>Julius Caesar</i> and use personal experience to relate the classic story to creating positive change in their own school climate.	Use this study guide to introduce the plot points and key themes and ideas of <i>Julius Caesar</i> to your students. Choose between activating the guide through writing & discussion or through embodied exploration, as outlined below.

## WRITTEN WORK WITH THE ANTICIPATION GUIDE:

- Put students in small groups and hand out the Anticipation Guide, which asks students to defend their opinion about key ideas related to *Julius Caesar*. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and they should fully discuss each statement with their group before writing down their answer.
- Remind them that it is okay if their answers do not match the others in their group.
- After each group has completed their work, lead a class discussion about answers that differed in groups.
- Ask students to remember their answers as they watch the play. After the play, continue the discussion and ask if any opinions have changed.

## EMBODIED WORK WITH THE ANTICIPATION GUIDE:

Use the content in the Anticipation Guide for a CONTINUUM ACTIVITY (inspired by Cornerstone Theater Company):

- Find an open area with room for students to line up side by side along an invisible line. One end of that line represents agreeing with the statement or view presented, while the other end represents disagreement. Ask students to find a place along the line that represents their personal point of view, somewhere between the two opposing viewpoints.
  - You might first try a low- to no-stakes practice round, just as: "I think pineapple belongs on pizza" or "I love to stay up late at night"
- Read one of the statements from the Anticipation Guide, and encourage students to physically place themselves on the spectrum of agree/disagree. A countdown can be helpful, for decision-making and behavior management (e.g. "You have 15 seconds" then after around 10, say "5-4-3-2-1").
- Ask for volunteers to explain why they placed themselves there on the continuum, or encourage pair shares with people either close to or far from them on the continuum.

PRO TIP: The Anticipation statements might bring up strong feelings or reveal vastly different opinions amongst peers and friends. Prepare students to be brave, honest and kind. Consider sandwiching it between a warm up (like the *What's Shaking?* Introductory Discussion Questions) and a cool down (like a dance party or free write), OR, warm up with the Synopsis game, then ease into this activity.

## ANTICIPATION GUIDE - STATEMENTS

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER WITH AN EXAMPLE
Words are more powerful than actions.			
If someone confides in you, you must keep that information confidential.			
A crowd is more powerful than an individual.			
Violent words or actions always lead to more violence.			
A good leader puts the needs of the people ahead of their personal needs.			
A planned act of violence always has warning signs.			
When you know that something dangerous is going to happen, you have a duty to try to prevent it.			
Violence is justifiable if it's for the greater good.			

# WHAT IS A “TRANSLATION” OF SHAKESPEARE?

**STEP 1:** [Watch this video created by Play On Shakespeare](#) (2 min. 4 sec.)

**STEP 2: Read two versions of the same part of *Julius Caesar* out loud.** First read the original Shakespeare, then read the translation by Shishir Kurup (see the text side-by-side on the page below).

## STEP 3: Discussion Questions

- What are 3 differences between the passages?
- Which one makes more sense to you? Why?
- How would you “translate” Shakespeare?

## STEP 4: Writing Assignment

In small groups, pick 2-4 lines from the original Shakespeare. Then, individually each student rewrites those lines in their own words. After writing, students share and compare their “translation” of the same lines: discuss why they chose to re-write the lines as they did, what each “translation” has in common and the ways they differ.

**OPTIONAL NEXT STEPS:** Students collaborate to combine their writing, using the most effective or interesting versions, and consolidating into one co-written “translation” per group. AND/OR, groups perform their “translations” for the class, with full theatrical energy!

Brutus (Act II, Sc i) Original Shakespeare:	Brutus (Act II, Sc i) Translation by Shishir Kurup and the A.C.T OUT ensemble:
<p>It must be by his death: and for my part I have no personal cause to spurn at him But for the general. He would be crowned: How that might change his nature, there's the question. It is the bright day that brings forth the adder, And that craves wary walking. Crown him that, And then I grant we put a sting in him That at his will he may do danger with. Th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins Remorse from power; and to speak truth of Caesar I have not known when his affections swayed More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof That lowliness is young ambition's ladder Whereto the climber upward turns his face; But when he once attains the upmost round, He then unto the ladder turns his back, Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees By which he did ascend. So Caesar may. Then, lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel Will bear no colour for the thing he is, Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented, Would run to these and these extremities. And therefore think him as a serpent's egg Which hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous, And kill him in the shell.</p>	<p>It must be by his death: and for my part I have no personal cause to strike at him But for the greater good. If he were crowned: How might that change his nature, that's the question. It is the bright day that brings forth the adder, And that demands careful walking. Crown him that, And then I fear we'll bless him with a sting That at his will he may do damage with. Th'abuse of greatness is when it divides Remorse from power; and truth be told of Caesar I've never known his feeling to sway him More than his reason. But it's a common tale That modesty is young ambition's ladder And when the climber makes it to the top He turns his back on all the lower rungs That helped him to ascend. So Caesar may. Then, since he may, prevent it! Since the quarrel Is with his future self, not what he is, Fashion it thus: that what he is, magnified, Would run to these and these extremities. Then think of Caesar as a serpent's egg Which once it's hatched would grow too troublesome: So kill him in the shell.</p>

## AFTER THE SHOW

Revisit parts of this guide that you didn't use before, including readings, videos & links, as well as activities and discussion prompts. Use some of the questions below for reflection, writing, or discussion:

- Why produce *Julius Caesar*, and why now? Did you feel the play connected with things happening in the world today? Or did it resonate with you personally? Why or why not?
- *Julius Caesar* is a play without clear heroes, and the audience is left with no character to root for - just people making mistakes, choosing violence, and getting stuck. What is the value of watching a play in which characters make mistakes? Do you learn more from a play in which characters behave badly, or in which characters behave well?
- What were the warning signs or omens that things were not right in Rome prior to Caesar's assassination? If you were a citizen of Rome, what might have tipped you off that something dangerous was about to happen?
- "*An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.*" What does this mean to you? Can you think of examples of this idea in *Julius Caesar*?
- Discuss the terms "herd intoxication" and "mob mentality." Where do we see examples of this in the play? Do people behave differently in a group than when they are alone?
- How can words be used to inspire action?
- What were some examples of positive, supportive relationships in the play?
- What were some examples of negative, unsupportive relationships?
- What loyalty do we owe our friends and partners?
- Research shows that in 81% of planned violence, someone other than the perpetrator knew it was going to happen. Which characters in the play knew about the planned attack on Caesar before it happened? Who had a chance to step in to prevent it, did they try, and why or why not?
- If you were aware that someone planned to harm others, how could you safely take action?
- What is empathy? Why is it important? How might empathy have changed the outcomes in the play?

Thanks to Amanda Giguere from the **Colorado Shakespeare Festival** for creating and sharing many of the questions above.



# PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE

Contact the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** if you are experiencing mental health-related distress or are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. Call or text 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) to connect with a trained counselor. 988 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365. Visit [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) for more information.

[Check out these resources](#) to help you recognize the warning signs of suicide, tools and support to help you cope, and ways to get help. We also recommend these additional [Mental Health Resources for Youth](#) from the California Department of Health and Human Services.

## BRIEF FACTS AND TIPS

- 1. Youth suicide is a serious problem.** Suicide is the leading cause of death among school age youth. In 2015, approximately 18% of 9th to 12th graders seriously considered suicide with 9% having made an attempt one or more times.
- 2. Suicide is preventable.** Youth who are contemplating suicide typically give warning signs of their distress. Most important is to never take these warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret.
- 3. Suicide Risk Factors.** Certain characteristics are associated with increased suicide risk include:
  - Previous suicide attempt(s)
  - Isolation and aloneness
  - Non-suicidal self-injury (e.g., cutting)
  - Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse
  - Family stress/dysfunction
  - Family history of suicide
  - Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home
  - Situational crises (e.g., the presence of a gun in the home, bullying and harassment, serious disciplinary action, death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, breakup of a relationship/friendship, family violence, suicide of a peer)
- 4. Suicide Warning Signs.** Most suicidal youth demonstrate observable behaviors signalling suicidal thinking:
  - Suicidal threats in the form of direct (e.g., “I am going to kill myself”) and indirect (e.g., “I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up again”) statements
  - Suicide notes and plans (including online postings)
  - Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions)
  - Preoccupation with death
  - Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings.

- 5. There are protective factors that can lessen the effects of risk factors.** These can include family and peer support, school and community connectedness, healthy problem-solving skills, and easy access to effective medical and mental health services.
- 6. Schools have an important role in preventing youth suicide.** Children and youth spend the majority of their day in school where caring and trained adults are available to help them. Schools need trained mental health staff and clear procedures for identifying and intervening with students at risk for suicidal behavior.
- 7. The entire school staff should work to create an environment where students feel safe.** School mental health and crisis team members are responsible for conducting suicide risk assessment, warn/inform parents, provide recommendations and referrals to community services, and often provide follow up counseling and support at school.
- 8. Collaboration between schools and community providers is critical.** Establishing partnerships with local community mental health agencies helps connect students to needed services in a timely manner and helps smooth re-entry to school.
- 9. Never ignore or keep information a secret.** Peers should not agree to keep the suicidal thoughts of a friend a secret and instead should tell an adult, such as a parent, teacher, or school psychologist. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to the designated school mental health professional or administrator.
- 10. Get immediate help if a suicide threat seems serious.** Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

#### **Suggested Resources:**

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- [Trevor Project for Youth and LGBTQ](#)
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

© 2015, National Association of School Psychologists; [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)



# VIDEO INTRODUCTIONS TO THE STORY

## Animated and straightforward options:

[A Shakespeare Julius Caesar Summary in under 6 minutes](#) (5:18)



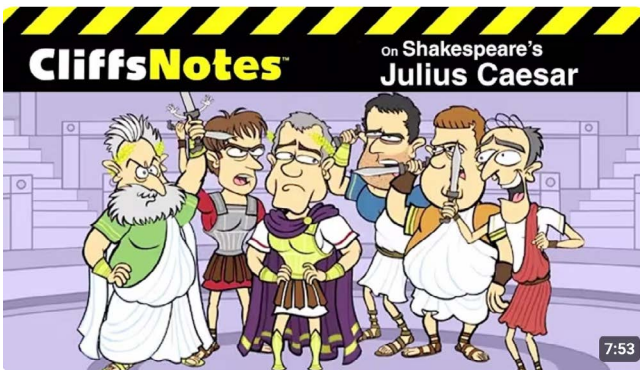
[Julius Caesar Video Summary | GradeSaver](#) (6:35)



## Other video options:

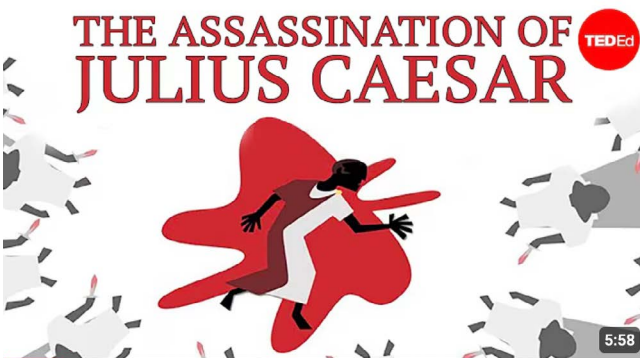
Animated and silly, while also emphasizing the theme of persuasion:

[Shakespeare's JULIUS CAESAR | CliffsNotes Video Summary](#) (7:52)



Summary of the actual history (rather than synopsis of the play), fantastic animation:

[The great conspiracy against Julius Caesar - Kathryn Tempest | TED-Ed](#) (5:57)



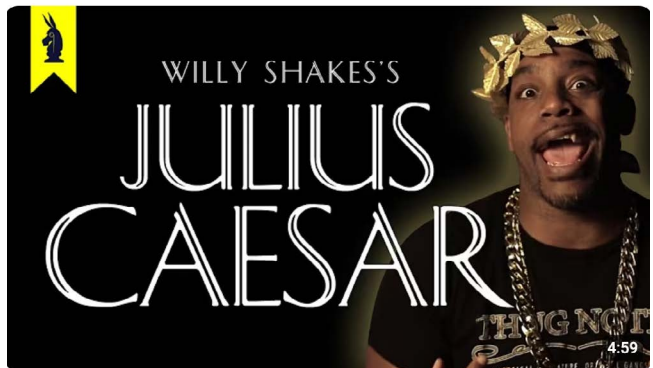
Animated yet academic, emphasizing the theme of power:

[Julius Caesar Power Theme Analysis | Schooling Online](#) (12:42)



Very fun synopsis with urban lens (beware of vulgar language and references to cannabis):

[Julius Caesar by Shakespeare - Thug Notes Summary & Analysis](#) (4:58)



\*Up until 2:48, it's summary. After that, it's analysis. Both are interesting! If the language isn't too problematic, this might be a very fun video to share.

Quick video emphasizing some of the key themes and central questions:

[Understand SHAKESPEARE'S Julius Caesar in 2 Minutes](#) (1:44)

\*We suggest watching this in addition to one of the synopsis videos above!



# ADDITIONAL SHAKESPEARE RESOURCES

## ADDITIONAL SHAKESPEARE RESOURCES

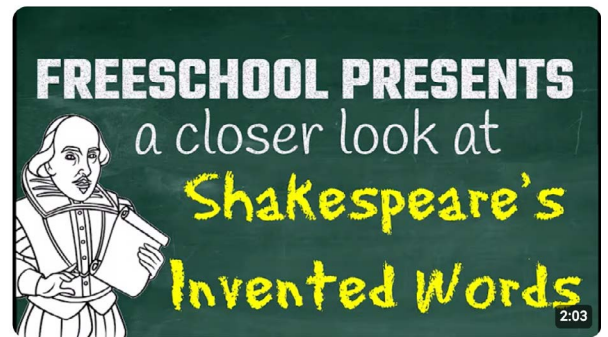
[UNDERSTAND SHAKESPEARE: King Lear, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet | Play On Shakespeare](#)

Hear from and learn about our partners at **Play On Shakespeare!** This video provides context about the how & why of presenting a **translation** of Shakespeare. Play On's founder Lue Douthit has led demonstrations all over the world showing artists and audiences how Shakespeare's text can undergo subtle changes and allow us to more fully understand not only the language but also the depth of the stories. As Lue says, "Shakespeare was popular 400 years ago, and I still want it to be popular culture today." (23:44) Learn more about Play On Shakespeare, and check out more demos [here](#).



[FreeSchool Presents: Shakespeare's Invented Words](#)

Explore words and phrases Invented by Shakespeare! He is credited with adding as many as 1700 words to the English language, but what does that mean? Watch to see some of the words the Bard is credited with inventing, as well as some famous phrases first recorded in his plays. (2:03)



[Ten Thousand Things](#)

*The A.C.T. OUT Tour is inspired by and grateful for the foundational work of Ten Thousand Things!*

Ten Thousand Things performs in prisons, homeless shelters, low-income housing and community centers. Their mission is to bring "lively, intelligent theater to people with little access to the wealth of the arts, invigorating ancient tales, classic stories, and contemporary plays through vital, open interactions between actors and non-traditional audiences."

MN Original follows them to the Hennepin County Adult

Corrections Facility for their performance of "Life's a Dream" by Pedro Calderon de la Barca, and talks with Artistic Director Michelle Hensley about the power of minimalist theater. (8:34)



[A.C.T. OUT Tour 2024: Measure for Measure](#)

Description: Using Shakespeare as a tool for dialogue and social change, the A.C.T. OUT Tour takes a no-frills, bare-bones, honest, and modern performance of a classic tale and reimagines it in, with, and for our local communities. Check out these video clips from last year's tour!





# LOGISTICS & REMINDERS

## FOR ALL SCHOOLS

- Discussing the show **before and after** you see it is a trauma-informed practice that helps students comprehend, contextualize, and maximize the experience of seeing the show. Thank you for using this Guide!
- *Julius Caesar* contains references to and depictions of violence, including murder and suicide. It also features content that is eerily relevant to our times. Please consider what kinds of support your students need before, during, and after the performance.
- Read the A.C.T. [“Rules of Play”](#) to learn more about how we hope you engage with the show! If your students would benefit from additional information about theater etiquette, consider discussing some of the points made by [Blake Theater](#).

## FOR ALL PERFORMANCES

- During the show, please stay in your seat unless using the restroom. Please be safe in the aisles, which the performers also use to enter and exit the space.
- No cell phone use during the performance. No unauthorized photo or video.
- To ensure a positive experience for all, we kindly request chaperones monitor students to limit phone use and promote respectful engagement. Please also allow and encourage participation; let students enjoy and experience the show on their own terms!
  - Laughter is welcome, and verbally responding to the show in a respectful way is welcome. We want the students to embrace the experience and express themselves.
  - Theater is alive and precious in that aliveness. Disrespectful engagement can be a real bummer. Encourage students to be present and mindful, helping ensure a positive live performance experience for all.
- Your students will have the opportunity to ask the performers questions after the show! Invite them to consider their curiosities in advance, and encourage them to participate in the Q&A.

## WHAT TO EXPECT IF THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR IS COMING TO YOU

- Pre-show communication is the key to success! After our initial scheduling process, please keep an eye on your email, we will:
  - Share space requirements, requests and other logistical details in advance.
  - Schedule a site visit where we can come check out the space and confirm details in person.
  - Follow up with confirmation emails, pre-show workshop scheduling, and more.
- We plan to use the last 3-5 minutes of the show’s anticipated 90-minute run time for a very brief discussion after the show, however, we’d prefer a longer conversation if possible. Please check in with us in advance about timeframes and time constraints.

## STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES at A.C.T.

- The post-show Q&A with the actors will last 15-20 minutes. Please consider staying for this dynamic engagement opportunity.
- Students are welcome to bring water bottles, to refill and use in the theater. Beverages in lidded cups, cans, and single serve bottles may be enjoyed at your seat. Food and glassware are not permitted in the performance space.
- [Double check A.C.T.’s COVID-19 updates](#). If you are feeling unwell, please stay home.
- [Learn about accessibility at A.C.T.](#)



by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

In a modern verse translation by SHISHIR KURUP

Adapted and directed by REBECCA J. ENNALS

Additional adaptation and translation by  
THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR COMPANY

## THE CAST



Alan Coyne



Monique Crawford



Lauren Dunagan



Shayna Ann Howlett



Christian Jimenez



Carolina Morones



Nic Sommerfeld



Chris Steele

A.C.T. PRESENTS

# JULIUS CAESAR

BY **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

IN A MODERN VERSE TRANSLATION BY **SHISHIR KURUP**

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY **REBECCA J. ENNALS**

ADDITIONAL ADAPTATION AND TRANSLATION BY **THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR COMPANY**

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## CAST

(In alphabetical order)

<b>Alan Coyne</b>	Julius Caesar, Plebeian, Trebonius, Cinna the Poet, Soldier, Strato
<b>Monique Crawford</b>	Brutus, Plebeian
<b>Lauren Dunagan</b>	Cassius, Plebeian, Soldier, Volumnius
<b>Shayna Ann Howlett</b>	Portia, Murellus, Plebeian, Soothsayer, Lucius, Decius, Lepidus, Messala
<b>Christian Jimenez</b>	Caska, Cobbler, Caesar's Servant, Lucillius
<b>Carolina Morones</b>	Calphurnia, Carpenter, Cinna, Octavius, Octavius' Servant, Pindarus, Clitus
<b>Nic Sommerfeld</b>	Mark Antony, Flavius, Metellus Cimber

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## CREATIVE TEAM

<b>Chris Steele</b>	Assistant Director, Dramaturg, Understudy
<b>Sarah Phykitt</b>	Scenic and Props Designer
<b>Madeline Berger</b>	Costume Designer
<b>Carla Pantoja</b>	Fight Director

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## ADDITIONAL CREDITS

<b>Natalie Greene</b>	Producer
<b>Rebecca J. Ennals</b>	Co-Producer
<b>Anelisa Armijo Montoya</b>	Associate Producer
<b>Michael Anderburg</b>	Production Manager
<b>Hannah Bailey</b>	Stage Manager
<b>Kamaile Alnas-Benson</b>	Assistant Stage Manager
<b>Lue Douthit</b>	Play On Co-Founder/Director of Research & Practice

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production, or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited.



<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

**Creating:** Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.

**Performing/Presenting/Producing:** Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.

**Responding:** Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

**Connecting:** Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

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## THE A.C.T. OUT TOUR IS PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PLAY ON SHAKESPEARE



**Special Thanks to:** all of the actors, production staff and creative team members bringing this show to life, as well as to Anelisa Armijo Montoya, Elizabeth Halperin, and all A.C.T. Education & Community Programs teaching artists & team members.

**Additional support for A.C.T.'s Education & Community Programs generously provided by:** Amazon, Bank of America, The Bernard Osher Foundation, Bill Graham Memorial Foundation, California Arts Council, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Hearst Foundations, Laird Norton Family Foundation, The Kimball Foundation, Koret Foundation, Rawley T. Farnsworth Fellowship Fund, San Francisco Department of Children, Youth & Their Families, The Sato Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Martin Tannenbaum/Gerald B. Rosenstein Estate, and U.S. Bank.



**Thank you for being a  
part of the first ever  
A.C.T. OUT Tour**

