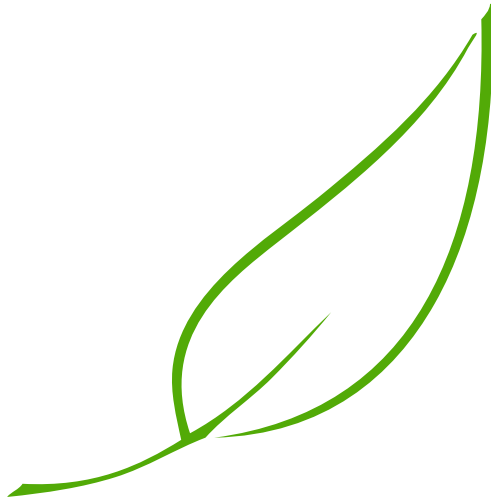


HAIL CAESAR!

by Ken Bradbury



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Characters (4): Julius Caesar and his wife Calpurnia; Caesar's guard, Sillius; Calpurnia's handmaiden, Calamatus

CALPURNIA: *(entering)* Caesar! Julius, darling?

CAESAR: *(entering)* Yes, my love?

CALPURNIA: Are you dressed yet?

CAESAR: I can't tell. My pajamas and my toga look so much alike. Am I dressed?

CALPURNIA: Close enough. Do you remember what today is?

CAESAR: Thursday?

CALPURNIA: I mean your schedule. You're to address the Roman Senate today.

CAESAR: Oh. I knew there was something.

CALPURNIA: Look darling, I hate to bring this up, but I had this dream ...

CAESAR: Not another dream! Calpurnia, you're always having dreams. I've warned you about eating roast pig right before bedtime.

CALPURNIA: Oh, very well.

CAESAR: So what was the dream?

CALPURNIA: Oh, nothing.

CAESAR: Come on, tell me.

CALPURNIA: It was nothing ... really.

SILLIUS: *(a guard, bursting into the room and shouting)*
Hail Caesar!

CAESAR: *(nearly jumping out of this skin)* Would you stop that!!!?

CALPURNIA: What is it, Sillius?

SILLIUS: *(still shouting)* Your chariot awaits!

CAESAR: That's it? You scared me half to death for that?

SILLIUS: Sorry, your highness.

CAESAR: Now leave me.

SILLIUS: Yes, sir. *(shouting)* Hail Caesar! *(He exits.)*

- CAESAR:** Stop that! My nerves ... I think I need a pill.
Now tell me about your dream.
- CALPURNIA:** Well, it was really nothing, but if you insist.
- CALAMATUS:** (*a handmaiden, entering, shouting*) Great Caesar!
- CAESAR:** (*again, reacting with a start*) Oh, good grief.
- CALPURNIA:** What is it, Calamatus?
- CALAMATUS:** (*a very high-strung, rapid speaking, flibberjibbet*) Something's wrong! I just know that something's wrong, because when I feel that something's wrong then I just know that something's wrong.
- CAESAR:** (*a long pause, then*) Is something wrong?
- CALAMATUS:** You knew! You already knew! How did you know? Oh, I should have known that you knew ... you know. Then it must be true! It can't be false if it must be true!
- CALPURNIA:** Calamatus!
- CALAMATUS:** Ma'am?
- CALPURNIA:** Cool it! What's your problem, girl?
- CALAMATUS:** Oh, I dare not say!
- CALPURNIA:** Very well.
- CALAMATUS:** But I will.
- CALPURNIA:** Oh, dear.
- CALAMATUS:** It's Caesar! I have a feeling that he will be murdered today!
- CAESAR:** Say what?
- CALAMATUS:** Murdered! You! In the Roman Senate!
- CAESAR:** I say. That's not good news.
- CALPURNIA:** Calamatus, see to your housework and stop bothering us.
- CALAMATUS:** Yes, Ma'am. (*She exits in a flurry.*)
- CAESAR:** Silly girl.
- CALPURNIA:** Silly, indeed.
- CAESAR:** So tell me about your dream.
- CALPURNIA:** Dream?
- CAESAR:** You had a dream ...

- CALPURNIA:** Oh. Oh yes, that! Look Julius, it's probably nothing.
- CAESAR:** Then why bring it up?
- CALPURNIA:** I just thought you should know.
- CAESAR:** So tell me.
- CALPURNIA:** Oh, it's probably nothing.
- CAESAR:** Woman, you are driving the Emperor out of his mind!
- CALPURNIA:** Alright! I'll tell you. Promise you won't take it personally?
- CAESAR:** I promise.
- CALPURNIA:** I dreamt you were murdered in the Senate today.
- CAESAR:** I ... I what?
- CALPURNIA:** Murdered. You. In the Roman Senate. Don't take it personally.
- CAESAR:** I say ... this morning is getting off to a bad start.
- CALPURNIA:** But it was probably nothing.
- CAESAR:** Bad pork.
- CALPURNIA:** Yes, bad pork.
- SILLIUS:** *(entering with a shout)* Hail Caesar!
- CAESAR:** Would you cut that out!!!
- SILLIUS:** The senators are gathering, your Highness!
- CAESAR:** Good. That's what senators do. Do they seem to be in a good mood?
- SILLIUS:** *(shouting)* They seem to have ...
- CAESAR:** *(shouting)* You don't have to shout!
- SILLIUS:** *(more calmly)* They seem to have daggers hidden under their togas.
- CAESAR:** Daggers under their togas? Is it hunting season?
- SILLIUS:** Your chariot awaits, Sire. *(shouting)* Hail Caesar! *(He exits.)*
- CAESAR:** Stop that! *(But he is gone.)* Oh, never mind. So what should I make of this, Calpurnia?
- CALPURNIA:** The toga? I think it's too tight. You ate pretty well in Greece and Egypt.
- CAESAR:** I mean about your dream ... and all these depressing omens.



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