

Rome

Mark Antony (Marcus Antonius) :

- **Traditionally gendered as** a he/him man.
 - It would be possible to play the character's gendering as *either* relevant *or* irrelevant according to the player's preferences.
- **Status/class** - High status, military general/triumvir.
 - One of three triumvirs at the top of the socio-political hierarchy in Rome, and the only one who knows that Julius Caesar (who potentially outranks the triumvirate) is still alive.
- **Character traits:**
 - Adaptable, suave and a cunning politician; whether persuading the conspirators that he is on their side, convincing Caesar to fake his death and heed his wife's warnings, or his famous oration at Caesar's funeral, deliberately using skilled rhetoric to rile the citizens up for his own influential advantage.
 - A people pleaser - especially concerning Cleopatra. While he may be capable on the battlefield, he is forever trying to compromise and find a peace between all parties. Unfortunately, many of the people he is trying to satisfy have directly contradictory desires; he is torn between too many conflicting allegiances, and it seems impossible for Julius Caesar, Calpurnia, Octavius, Octavia, Lepidus, Enobarbus and especially Cleopatra to all remain pleased with Antony and his actions - never mind the tensions with Brutus, Cassius and Pompey.
 - His love for Cleopatra may be his Achilles' heel, but his duty to Rome is almost as strong as his passion for her. The proposed marriage to Octavia is just one example of his continued devotion to Roman politics, however enchanting Cleopatra may be. However, as the Plothole opens, with the potential return of Caesar destabilising the triumvirate, as well as the introduction of several unexpected characters from strange places, it may be that Antony must choose his own path - whether this is in Rome, Egypt, or elsewhere - or his constant compromising could prove fatal.
 - A passionate hedonist and a hopeless romantic at heart. Lately, his priority has been his courtship of Cleopatra, and the threat of Pompey's rebellion has been brushed aside as he is enraptured with his lover. Should he believe her to be dead, he is just as likely to end his own life as he is to furiously avenge her.
- **You may wish to play Mark Antony if** you want to begin with an established romantic relationship and the "Lover's Heart" archetype, if you want to engage in difficult diplomacy and likely social opposition to other player characters, or if you want an IC wedding.
- **You may not wish to play Mark Antony if** you want to avoid themes of warfare, romantic love or potential suicide, if you are uncomfortable with PvP conflict, or if you are keen for more supernatural Magicks.
- **Key Quote:** "*Hear me, queen: the strong necessity of time commands our services awhile; but my full heart remains in use with you.*"

Cleopatra VII Thea Philopator:

- **Traditionally gendered as** a she/her woman.
 - The character's relationship with gender is often a key theme for the role; whilst it would be possible to do something different with it or de-emphasise it, this role is probably not suited for anyone who is uncomfortable examining the character's relationship to gender and gender roles, even if adapted.
- **Status/class** - Queen of Ptolemaic Egypt; outside of Roman hierarchy.
- **Character traits:**
 - Hedonistic, passionate and insatiable; her appetite for drama extends beyond Masques and entertainment, and she delights in encouraging others to give in to their desires, however bloody they may be. She feels everything to excess - love, grief, anger, delicious food, sweet music, and it is easy for others to get swept up in a chaotic whirlwind of her enthusiasm.
 - Extremely intelligent and a capable and calculating politician. Where Romans dismiss and underestimate her, or consider her a witch, who first charmed Julius Caesar and has now captivated Mark Antony, she is not merely a skilled seductress; under her rule, Egypt has been stable and prosperous. She speaks nine languages, commanded an army against her brother, and the Roman generals who paint her as an exotic succubus should be wary that as hot-tempered she may be, she is a force to be reckoned with.
 - Besides having the ear of Mark Antony, she has not been consulted in the ongoing war plans, and, to add salt to the wound, her paramour is now engaged to Octavia. As the Plothole opens, it may be that she finds a new audience that pays her attention. Whether she leans into her public image as a temptress, or addresses and dispels it; anything could happen, in an unknown land filled with Magicks...
 - Proud, and unashamedly brazen. She will refuse to be taken as a trophy and humiliated in the streets if she is defeated, and would rather retain control and dignity by taking her life into her own hands. She will not tolerate any insults or disrespect, and has even been known to draw a knife upon messengers who bring her bad news. She is the last Hellenistic Pharaoh, holding the line to prevent Egypt from becoming a Roman province.
- **You may wish to play Cleopatra if** you want to play a beguiling Queen with the "Mystic Knowledge" archetype, if you want to begin with an established romantic relationship, or if you would enjoy an impulsive "yes and" approach to roleplay, embracing excess and extremes.
- **You may not wish to play Cleopatra if** you are uncomfortable examining themes of gendered expectations (and subversion), sexuality or seduction, or potential suicide; if you want to play a calm, modest, or shy character, or if you want to play a conflict-avoidant role.
- **Key Quote:** *"Sink Rome, and their tongues rot that speak against us! A charge we bear i' the war, and, as the president of my kingdom, will appear there for a man. Speak not against it: I will not stay behind."*

Brutus (Quintus Servilius Caepio Brutus):

- **Traditionally gendered as** a he/him man.
 - Gender is largely irrelevant to the character - players may choose to do something with this or ignore it as they see fit.
- **Status/class** - Praetor (prestigious military rank), Patrician (noble)
 - Outranked by triumvirs (Mark Antony, Lepidus and Octavius), emperor (Julius Caesar), prefect (Pompey) and consul (Enobarbus)
- **Character traits:**
 - An idealist, to a fault; where he wishes to curtail violence, he ignores Cassius' suggestion that the conspirators kill Antony at the same time as Caesar, leaving himself vulnerable. Again, in a moment of naïveté, he allows Antony to have the final word and incite the plebians against him at Caesar's funeral oration. His staunch stance against self-serving ambition leads him to betray his friend, out of absolute dedication to Republican ideals.
 - Paranoid, gullible, and easy to manipulate: once Cassius plants the seed of a coup in Brutus' mind, he becomes obsessed with the possibility of Caesar's ambition and is led to scheme against one of his closest friends. However, the plan went awry: whilst Caesar has been notably absent since the Ides of March four years prior, the suspicious nature of the charred remains before any conspirators could reach the Dictator with a blade casts a shadow of doubt over whether or not the assassination was a success - several claimed credit for the 23 stab wounds found in the corpse, but none could tell who had set him on fire first..
 - Whilst the triumvirs granted clemency to the conspirators, Brutus knows that his reputation is tainted, and that same paranoia that fuelled his conspiracy could lead to further downfall if he cannot learn from this. However, this doubt surrounding the nature of Caesar's "death" leaves room for more hesitation and questioning. Thrust into an unfamiliar land, with unexpected strangers, Brutus may need to find a balance: whether to be wary and skeptical, or trust others.
 - Out of touch; by attempting to enforce his own personal honour code on society, he inadvertently brings about the end of the Roman Republic he so reveres, with Caesar's son Octavius gaining more power each day, likely to impose a new dictatorship if he can. He does not anticipate the plebeians' outpouring of love and sympathy for Caesar, or their fury that a few aristocrats had decided to sacrifice their popular leader.
- **You may wish to play Brutus if** you want to play a military character with the "Noble Might" archetype, if you want to battle introspective emotional turmoil/angst, or if you are keen for political roleplay.
- **You may not wish to play Brutus if** you would prefer a plotline around romantic love, if you are more interested in Masques and other Magicks, or if you want to avoid PvP tension and/or conflict.
- **Key Quote:** *"Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar, I have not slept. Between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first motion all the interim is like a phantasma, or a hideous dream".*

Octavius (Gaius Julius Caesar Octavius):

- **Traditionally gendered as** a he/him man.
 - It would be possible to play the character's gendering as *either* relevant or irrelevant according to the player's preferences.
- **Status/class** - High status, military general/triumvir.
 - One of three triumvirs at the top of the socio-political hierarchy in Rome. Adopted son of "late" emperor Julius Caesar.
- **Character traits:**
 - Ambitious; with Antony distracted and Lepidus' personal and political power waning, Octavius seizes the opportunity to push for ultimate power and to surpass his father as the first official Roman Emperor. His military pursuit is relentless, and whilst his frustrations with his fellow triumvirs may be justified, his singular focus on totalitarianism consumes him.
 - Domineering; he always has to be in total control, and any opposition to that desire is extremely vexatious. His desire for Cleopatra to bend the knee and to display her as a trophy in Rome is not solely a Freudian desire for his father's former lover, but demonstrates his need to possess everything and everyone. Any time others exercise their own free will, it infuriates him, and he has no patience for those who disagree.
 - However, he has great respect for Antony's heroic exploits of the past, lamenting what he perceives to be the decline of a great Roman soldier, blaming Cleopatra for the neglect Antony now shows for his duties in Rome. Likewise, although dictating how others should behave, it is not unreasonable to be incensed if, after Antony swears an oath to be a faithful husband to Octavia, he breaks this vow. Even so, this is hypocritical; Octavius is more than prepared to cut Lepidus out of any spoils of war, despite using his resources to fight, and will withhold as many lands from Antony as he can, too, belittling him in public instead of trying to work together as a triumvirate. As the Plothole opens, suddenly met with unfamiliar faces and places, Octavius may find it increasingly difficult to retain control, and if he does not learn to bend, he may break...
 - Calculating, with potential for cruelty; his ruthless military campaign is not impersonal, and he will deliberately identify his enemies' weaknesses to exploit them. If fighting a former ally, he will fill his army's front line with his opponent's former soldiers who have defected, just to twist the knife.
- **You may wish to play Octavius if** you want to play a military leader with the "Noble Might" archetype, if you want to play a more morally grey role, or if you want political roleplay with potential for PvP.
- **You may not wish to play Octavius if** you want to play an empathetic or heroic character, if you want your plot driven by romance or similar, or if you want to play a shy or conflict-avoidant character.
- **Key Quote:** *"He calls me boy; and chides [...] let the old ruffian know I have many other ways to die; meantime laugh at his challenge."*

Cassius (Gaius Cassius Longinus):

- **Traditionally gendered as** a he/him man.
 - Gender is largely irrelevant to the character - players may choose to do something with this or ignore it as they see fit.
- **Status/class** - Patrician (noble) and Senator, but outranked by most.
- **Character traits:**
 - A skilled orator, able to manipulate others with his words. Whilst flattering Brutus when first nudging him towards conspiracy, he realises that Brutus will be most easily swayed by rhetoric around what he believes the general populace to think, and to play upon Brutus' honour and convince him that the people mistrust Caesar will be more effective than any personal misgivings Brutus may have. He is not above forging letters to further his own goals and exploit others' perceived weaknesses.
 - Jealous and malcontent, to a degree of bitterness bordering on narcissism. Where Brutus' concerns are for the state of the Republic, Cassius' motivations are far more selfish, resenting Caesar's power and influence because he envies his position. However, the plan went awry: the suspicious nature of the charred remains before any conspirators could reach the Dictator with a blade casts a shadow of doubt over the assassination - several claimed credit for the 23 stab wounds found in the corpse, but none could tell who had set him on fire first...
 - In the aftermath of the assassination, Cassius has not gained the adoration he so desperately sought, but rather has had his reputation tainted; whilst the triumvirs granted clemency to the conspirators, it is now an uphill battle for Cassius to regain the trust of the Senate, much less seize the power he coveted for himself. However, as the Plothole opens, and he finds himself in a strange land with unexpected companions, perhaps he can carve out a new destiny and find a path toward redemption and happiness.
 - Careful and cautious; he foresees the danger of letting Antony speak at Caesar's funeral where Brutus does not, he has Cinna plant the forged evidence rather than risk getting caught himself, and after allowing Casca to make the first blow, he slips away from the crowd before Antony incites the revolt. Lately, his attention has been on Calpurnia, seeking certainty around Caesar's death and whereabouts, and fearing his return to haunt him for the betrayal; whether as a man or as a ghost.
- **You may wish to play Cassius if** you want to play a manipulative meddler with the "Gift of the Gab" archetype, if you want to play a more villainous role, or if you are keen for political roleplay.
- **You may not wish to play Cassius if** you want to play a virtuous or empathetic character, if you want a romance-focused plotline, or if you are more interested in e.g. supernatural characters available.
- **Key Quote:** *"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings. Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'? Why should that name be sounded more than yours?"*

Calpurnia Caesar:

- **Traditionally gendered as** a she/her woman.
 - It would be possible to play the character's gendering as *either* relevant or irrelevant according to the player's preferences.
- **Status/class** - Dowager Empress; "widow" of Julius Caesar.
- **Character traits:**
 - Loving; she shows genuine concern for her husband's safety, and he is ultimately swayed by her words, as this doting tenderness is reciprocated. She is loyal, devoted and virtuous.
 - A powerful soothsayer, with supernatural, prophetic dreams. However, she has by necessity refused to use her divining powers lately, as Brutus and Cassius pressure her for oracles about whether her husband will return - either as a man or a ghost.
 - This stoic refusal to reach for any premonitions (lest her enemies gain this knowledge from her) has been bitterly heartbreaking. If she were to give in and seek answers, no portents available are auspicious: if her husband lives, and is safe and well, then she has been cruelly abandoned. If her husband lives, but has not been able to reach out to her as he is in grave danger, this too is distressing news. If he is indeed dead, as most believe him to be, although the charred body discovered was too disfigured to identify the Emperor for certain, then this, too, feels hopeless. However, as the Plothole opens and unexpected events unfold on this mystical island, it may be that she will have cause to use her Unnatural Ability once more, and even if her husband does lie dead, perhaps there is hope in necromancy...
 - Pragmatic - whether finding practical reasons for Caesar to stay home from senate, suggesting he feigns illness, or taking the initiative to deliver his will and possessions to Mark Antony, his most trusted Consul and companion. She shows no outward concern about her husband's many affairs: from seducing King Nicomedes IV of Bithynia back when he was married to Cornelia, to his affairs with the Mauretanian queen, Eunoë, and with Cleopatra, whilst he was married to Pompeia. Within their own marriage, it was public knowledge that he was having an intimate affair with Servillia, mother of Brutus and mother-in-law of Cassius - but whether these affairs privately bother her or not, she retains practical public composure and decorum regardless.
- **You may wish to play Calpurnia if** you want to play a gifted mage with the "Unnatural Ability" archetype, if you are interested in Magicks surrounding death, fate, and ghosts, or if you want to play a stoic.
- **You may not wish to play Calpurnia if** you want to play a physically aggressive character, if you want e.g. a more comedic "Entertainer", or if you want to play a more carefree/mischievous/playful role.
- **Key Quote:** *"What mean you, Caesar? think you to walk forth? You shall not stir out of your house to-day [...] dying men did groan, and ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets. O Caesar! these things are beyond all use, and I do fear them."*