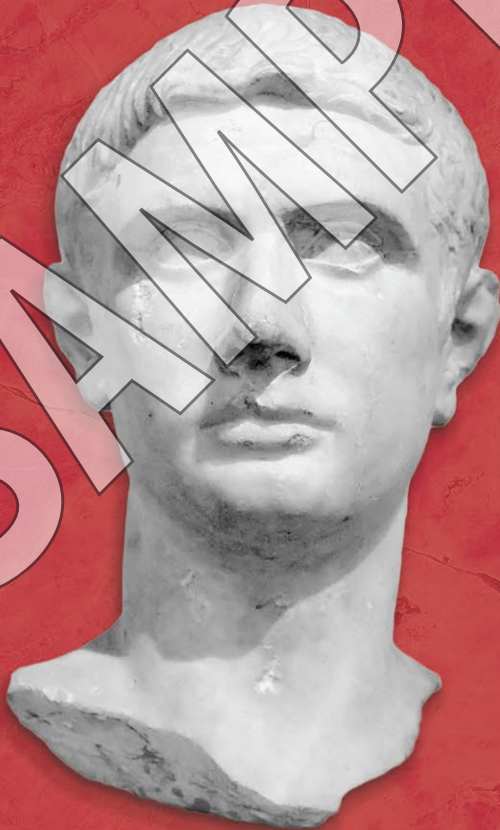


Simply Charlotte Mason presents

CONVERSATIONS ON CHARACTER

PLUTARCH'S
LIFE OF MARCUS BRUTUS



by Larry Hunt

“...it is my duty to dwell especially upon those actions which reveal the workings of my heroes’ minds, and from these to construct the portraits of their respective lives.” —Plutarch

Plutarch's Lives is a wealth of character studies, written in ancient times by a master biographer who wanted his readers to understand who the Greek and Romans were as people. By focusing on stories that show what the hero valued rather than on his accomplishments, Plutarch shines a spotlight on the character qualities of the men of ancient times.

Conversations on Character makes Plutarch accessible for students in fourth grade and up, providing interesting readings, helpful summaries of each section, and discussion questions that guide your student to consider the character of each hero studied. Everything you need is in this guide. The full reading from Plutarch is included, along with questions and narration prompts to spark conversations around each reading. The included companion videos guide your student with a reading of the full text and starting thoughts for the discussion questions.

Give your student the opportunity to grow in understanding character qualities with *Conversations on Character*!

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Charlotte Mason

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CONVERSATIONS ON CHARACTER

PLUTARCH'S

Life of Marcus Brutus

by Larry Hunt

Conversations on Character: Plutarch's Life of Marcus Brutus
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PREFACE: WHO WAS PLUTARCH?

Usually, I love a book for its own sake. Something about its characters, plot, and setting captures my imagination and draws me in. But every once in a while, I love a book for the sake of its author as well. For instance, when I read a book by C. S. Lewis or George MacDonald, I feel like I am in the company of a friend and mentor, someone I could trust with my own children.

I feel the same way about Plutarch, and I am not alone. People have loved Plutarch for nearly 2,000 years. Indeed, he is one of the most beloved authors in the entire canon of literature, not merely because of his excellent work as a historian and philosopher, but because readers sense that he was a good man with a genuine desire to improve his own soul and theirs.

We know relatively little about the life of the man himself, which is ironic, given that he is famous for writing biographies. He was born around 45 A.D. in Chaeronea, a small Greek city in the Boeotian plain. As a young man, he studied philosophy in Athens and distinguished himself in this discipline for the rest of his life. He even headed his own school in Chaeronea where he taught philosophy.

Indeed, it was his work as a philosopher, teacher, and writer that made him quite popular in Rome, where he was invited to give a series of lectures on philosophical topics. While there, he traveled around Italy, sight-seeing and gathering knowledge

about the famous Romans who would later appear in his greatest work: *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*.

Plutarch also made a trip to Alexandria, Egypt, which was the intellectual center of the world in his lifetime. The wisdom of Egypt had long fascinated the ancient Greeks, and Plutarch must have been thrilled to explore the wonders of that land.

In spite of these travels, however, and the lure of celebrity, Plutarch was attached to his homeland. He chose to spend most of his life in the little town of his birth, joyfully devoting his active mind to family life, teaching, and civic duty. As a storyteller and historian, he loved the tales of adventure that he chronicled in his biographies, but as a philosopher, he understood that one's life does not need to be epic in order to be noble. He believed that a simple but virtuous life, a life crowned by love, reason, self-control, and humility, is far nobler than that of many a famous king.

In this series, we will be studying the biographies he wrote, known collectively as *The Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* or sometimes, simply, Plutarch's *Lives*. Plutarch himself called the collection *Parallel Lives* because he intended to present his biographies in pairs, one Greek and one Roman. He selected the pairs based on similarities of personality or circumstance. For instance, he paired Theseus, the founder-hero of Athens, with Romulus, legendary founder of Rome. Pairing them like this naturally invites a comparison of the two lives, which Plutarch often did in a concluding section. In these comparisons, Plutarch sifts the best qualities of each person by comparing and contrasting one with the other in the ways that each dealt with similar challenges.

And this gives us some insight into the true purpose of Plutarch's *Lives*.

Although his *Lives* is a useful source of historical knowledge, Plutarch made a very clear distinction between the purpose of his book and that of strict history.

“I am writing biography, not history; and often a man’s most brilliant actions prove nothing as to his true character, while some trifling incident, some casual remark or jest, will throw more light upon what manner of man he was than the bloodiest battle, the greatest array of armies, or the most important siege. Therefore, just as portrait painters pay most attention to those peculiarities of the face and eyes, in which the likeness consists, and care but little for the rest of the figure, so it is my duty to dwell especially upon those actions which reveal the workings of my heroes’ minds, and from these to construct the portraits of their respective lives, leaving their battles and their great deeds to be recorded by others.”

Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*

So the essential aim of history is to record the momentous events of the past for their own sake. Plutarch’s aim, however, was to present the moral qualities of those who were responsible for such great events, not primarily for their historical value but for their potential to inspire him and his readers to live a good, honorable, and satisfying life. He put it best when he wrote,

“It was for the sake of others that I first started to write biographies, but I soon began to dwell upon and delight in them for myself, endeavoring to the best of my ability to regulate my own life by them, and to mirror the virtues I saw in these great people. By the study of their biographies, we receive each person as a guest into our minds. . . and so train ourselves by constantly dwelling upon the memorials of the great and good, that should anything base or vicious be placed in our way by the society into which we are necessarily thrown, we reject it and expel it from our

thoughts, by fixing them calmly and happily on what is noble.”

Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon*

This perfectly describes my experience of reading Plutarch’s *Lives*, and I hope it will describe yours as well. Plutarch was a skilled storyteller, and his subjects led fascinating lives. As I read about these remarkable people, I feel as though I am living with them, sharing in their adventures, and fixing my thoughts “calmly and happily on what is noble.”

But there is one noble life in particular that inspires me whenever I read these biographies, a simple life that does not appear in the collection as such but which gives the whole work its spirit and beauty, and that is the life of its author, who speaks to me over centuries of time to show me how to live well.

A NOTE ABOUT THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

The translation I have selected for these study guides is that of Aubrey Stewart and George Long, both Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. Initially, I considered using John Dryden’s translation since I first grew to love Plutarch in that translation. I also considered using Thomas North’s translation since it has a good reputation and was the version that Shakespeare drew upon for the plays *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but in the end I believe that Stewart and Long’s is the best choice.

For one thing, the translations of North (1579) and Dryden (1683) contain many old-fashioned words, making them less accessible to the modern reader. Also, these two are not as accurate as Stewart and Long’s translation. North’s is a translation of Amyot’s French translation, so it is a translation of a translation. The translation called by Dryden’s name was

in fact the work of a committee, whose members had varying degrees of skill, so while it is “translated from the Greek,” Dryden’s translation is widely acknowledged to be inferior to North’s.

Stewart and Long were both excellent scholars. Their translation is from the original Greek, and its relatively modern (1892) vocabulary is more accessible.

For the most part, the text appears entire and in its original order, but on rare occasions, I may take the liberty of rearranging a few sections for thematic reasons. Also, in a very few places, I have omitted content that may not be appropriate for younger readers. Where I have changed the text in these ways, I have noted the fact and summarized the omitted sections. Where applicable, spelling and punctuation have been updated to modern conventions.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book can be used on its own or with my video lectures. You can go through all of the readings at whatever pace you like. However, if you decide to skip some, I suggest that you read my summaries of the omitted readings in order to provide continuity.

Each reading is set up in the following way: a preliminary summary, the text of the reading, a narration prompt, and discussion questions at the end.

Summaries

I have written a summary at the beginning of each reading in case the student (or parent) would like to get the essence of the reading ahead of time.

Readings and Narration

I read each of these sections in my videos before I talk about the reading itself. Each reading is around three pages long on average. If you are using my video, you could press pause during the reading, or immediately afterward, to allow the student to narrate what he or she remembers. (See the What is Narration section below.) Once this is done to your satisfaction, you could either return to the video to hear my thoughts on the reading and/or conduct your own discussion with the students. The book provides questions after each reading to help facilitate your own discussions.

Discussion Questions

I do not intend for these sections to be like quizzes over the reading. I only mean for them to invite students to think more deeply about aspects of the reading that seem to be the most important or interesting. Students should not feel bad if they do not know the answers. (Sometimes, the answers are not even directly given in the reading). I will address each of these discussion questions in the video after I read the text.

Companion Videos

Companion videos are available for each installment of the Conversations on Character: Plutarch series and include summaries, a live reading of the text, and the discussion questions. Due to the nature of the language in the translation, it is highly recommended to use the video companion while following along with the text. If you have any questions about accessing the videos through your SCM account, send an email to contact@simplycharlottemason.com.

Maps



Your purchase of this book includes access to maps that will familiarize students with the geography of the stories as well as the logistics

of particular events (such as battles). Use the QR code or this short url to access and download the maps: simplycm.com/plutarchs-brutus-maps.

WHAT IS NARRATION?

At the end of each of my readings, you are invited to narrate what you heard, so it is important to understand what narration is.

Narration and *intentional reading* are skills that Charlotte Mason emphasized, and I think they are very valuable skills, particularly these days when our ability to focus on a text deeply has been weakened by the hundreds of shiny promises of entertainment that flash around us constantly.

In order to narrate, you must first read or listen to a reading closely. Here are a few quotations from Charlotte Mason herself that will help get the idea across.

This habit should be begun early; so soon as the child can read at all, he should read for himself, and to himself, history, legends, fairy tales, and other suitable matter. He should be trained from the first to think that one reading of any lesson is enough to enable him to narrate what he has read, and will thus get the habit of slow, careful reading, intelligent even when it is silent, because he reads with an eye to the full meaning of every clause.

Home Education, p. 227

The sort of focus that Charlotte Mason is describing here can be developed while reading on your own or while listening to someone else read. (In Plutarch's lifetime, literature was copied out by hand, which made manuscripts rare. As a consequence, you would probably have *heard* his stories read aloud to you rather than read them yourself, so when you listen to me read aloud, not only will you be developing your ability to focus, you will also be participating in a very ancient tradition.)

After an intentional reading, you have prepared yourself to narrate. When you narrate, you take on the role of storyteller, retelling the events of the story you just heard. Here is how Charlotte Mason describes the practice.

It is most interesting to hear children of seven or eight go through a long story without missing a detail, putting every event in its right order. These narrations are never a slavish reproduction of the original. A child's individuality plays about what he enjoys, and the story comes from his lips, not precisely as the author tells it, but with a certain spirit and colouring which express the narrator. By the way, it is very important that children should be allowed to narrate in their own way, and should not be pulled up or helped with words and expressions from the text. A narration should be original as it comes from the child—that is, his own mind should have acted upon the matter it has received. Narrations which are mere feats of memory are quite valueless.

Home Education, p. 289

She has younger students in mind here simply because the skills of close reading (or listening) and narration should be developed early in one's life, not because they have no value for older students.

So if you are using my videos with this study guide, and you want to try your hand at narration, simply pause the video after the reading and narrate. You can do this in whatever way works best: to yourself or someone else, orally, or in writing. Also, if the reading is too long, you could pause the video and narrate once or twice before the end.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

WHO WAS MARCUS BRUTUS?

Et tu, Brute?

Most people who have heard of Marcus Brutus, think of him in the spirit of this line from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* even if they have never seen that famous play. Cæsar's words, meaning "You too, Brutus?" mark the moment he realizes that his trusted friend, Brutus, is among those who have surrounded him, daggers drawn, to assassinate him. In that brief question, Cæsar perfectly captures the overwhelming sense of despair and betrayal that he felt then. Indeed, Plutarch tells us that, after seeing Brutus, Cæsar gave up struggling against his attackers and submitted to their blows.

And that is how Brutus is remembered by many. The name *Brutus*, like *Benedict Arnold*, has become a synonym for *traitor*. In his *Inferno*, Dante Alighieri even goes so far as to place Brutus in the lowest circle of hell for this act, sharing the same punishment as Judas Iscariot, betrayer of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this was not so in Brutus' own day. During his lifetime, the name *Brutus* was synonymous with *liberator* and *hero*. That is because of Marcus Brutus' famous ancestor, Junius Brutus, who liberated the Roman people from the tyrannical reign of King Tarquin the Proud and founded the Roman republic centuries earlier. When Marcus Brutus' contemporaries rebuked him for not quickly joining the plot against Cæsar, they said, "You are

not Brutus,” implying that he did not deserve the name because he lacked the courage and resolve of his famous ancestor to stand up for freedom and overthrow the new tyrant, Julius Cæsar. In the end, Brutus *did* have the courage and resolve to do this, and so great was his reputation for virtue that even his enemies did not believe that he was motivated to kill Cæsar by hidden ambition or selfishness of any kind. As Plutarch puts it: “Even those who were his enemies on account of the conspiracy against Cæsar, attributed to Brutus whatever of good the act brought with it.”

It is tragically unfair that Brutus should be thought of as a traitor and that his life should be reduced to his part in the assassination of Cæsar. Who now remembers his love of learning, his deep tenderness and admiration for his wife, his self-restraint and mercy toward his enemies during war?

All who read Plutarch’s *Life of Marcus Brutus* do.

LIFE OF MARCUS BRUTUS

READING 1 ---

SUMMARY

Marcus Brutus was a descendant of Junius Brutus, the ancient hero who overthrew Tarquin the Proud (the last Roman king) and established the Roman republic centuries earlier. However, Junius Brutus was a harsh man whose character was not purified by training in philosophy. By contrast, Marcus Brutus devoted himself to philosophical training and thus guided his mind and actions to virtue. As a result, he was widely admired for his moral discipline and intelligence.

FROM PLUTARCH

Use the video for reading 1 to guide you through the following text:

The ancestor of Marcus Brutus was Junius Brutus, whose statue of bronze the Romans of old set up in the Capitol in the midst of the kings with a drawn sword in his hand, thereby signifying that it was he who completely accomplished the putting down of the Tarquinius. Now that

Brutus, like swords forged of cold iron, having a temper naturally hard and not softened by education, was carried on even to slaying of his sons through his passion against the tyrants; but this Brutus, about whom I am now writing, having tempered his natural disposition with discipline and philosophical training and roused his earnest and mild character by impulse to action, is considered to have been most aptly fashioned to virtue, so that even those who were his enemies on account of the conspiracy against Cæsar, attributed to Brutus whatever of good the act brought with it, and the worst of what happened they imputed to Cassius, who was a kinsman and friend of Brutus, but in his disposition not so simple and pure. His mother, Servilia, traced her descent from Ala Servilius, who, when Mallius Spurius was contriving to establish a tyranny and was stirring up the people, put a dagger under his arm, and going into the Forum and taking his stand close to the man, as if he were going to have something to do with him and to address him, struck him as he bent forwards and killed him. Now this is agreed on, but those who showed hatred and enmity towards Brutus on account of Cæsar's death say that on the father's side he was not descended from the expeller of the Tarquinius, for that Brutus, after putting his sons to death left no descendants, but this Brutus was a plebeian, the son of one Brutus who was a bailiff and had only recently attained to a magistracy. Poseidonius the philosopher says that the sons of Brutus, who had arrived at man's estate, were put to death as the story is told, but there was left a third, an infant, from whom the race of Brutus descended, and that some of the illustrious men of his time, who belonged to the family, showed a personal resemblance to the statue of Brutus. So much about this.

Servilia, the mother of Brutus, was a sister of Cato the philosopher, whom, most of all the Romans, this Brutus took for his model, Cato being his uncle and afterwards his father-in-law. As to the Greek philosophers, there was not one, so to say, whom he did not hear or to whom he was averse, but he devoted himself especially to those of Plato's school. The Academy called the New and the Middle he was

not much disposed to, and he attached himself to the Old and continued to be an admirer of Antiochus of Ascalon, but, for his friend and companion, he chose Antiochus' brother Aristus, a man who in his manner of discourse was inferior to many philosophers but in well-regulated habits and mildness a rival to the first. Empylus, whom both Brutus in his letters and his friends often mentioned as being in intimacy with him, was a rhetorician and left a small work, though not a mean one, on the assassination of Cæsar, which is inscribed Brutus. In the Latin language Brutus was sufficiently trained for oratory and the contests of the forum, but in the Greek, he practiced the apophthegmatic and Laconic brevity which is sometimes conspicuous in his letters. For instance, when he was now engaged in the war, he wrote to the people of Pergamum: "I hear that you have given money to Dolabella; if you gave it willingly, you admit your wrong; if you gave it unwillingly, make proof of this by giving to me willingly!" On another occasion, to the Samians: "Your counsels are trifling; your help is slow. What end do you expect of this?" And another about the people of Patara: "The Xanthians, by rejecting my favors, have made their country the tomb of their desperation. The people of Patara, by trusting to me, want nothing of liberty in the management of their affairs. It is therefore in your power also to choose the decision of the people of Patara or the fortune of the Xanthians." Such is the character of the most remarkable of his letters.

NARRATION

Tell how Marcus Brutus differed from his ancestor Julius Brutus in reputation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Plutarch writes, "This Brutus, about whom I am now writing, having tempered his natural disposition with discipline and philosophical training and roused his earnest and mild character by impulse to action, is considered to

have been most aptly fashioned to virtue . . .” What do you think he means by “philosophical training”? How could the study of philosophy make one virtuous?

2. If anyone disliked Brutus, what was the reason?

READING 2 ---

SUMMARY

As a young man, Brutus assists his uncle Cato in his administrative duties to the republic, and when civil war breaks out, he chooses the side of Pompeius, to the delight and surprise of that great general. In spite of this choice, however, Cæsar is exceedingly merciful toward and considerate of Brutus, possibly because he believes Brutus to be his son. After the defeat of Pompeius, Brutus changes sides and joins Cæsar, serving very effectively under his leadership as the civil war ends.

FROM PLUTARCH

Use the video for reading 2 to guide you through the following text:

While he was still a youth, he went abroad with his uncle Cato, who was sent to Cyprus to Ptolemæus. After Ptolemæus had put an end to himself, Cato, being detained of necessity in Rhodes, happened to have sent Canidius, one of his friends, to look after the money, but as he feared that Canidius would not keep his hands from filching, he wrote to Brutus to sail as quick as he could to Cyprus from Pamphylia, for Brutus was staying there to recover from an illness. Brutus sailed very much against his will, both out of respect for Canidius, as being undeservedly deprived of his functions by

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why were the people of Epidamnus so kind to Brutus?
2. How does Brutus treat Caius, brother of (Marcus) Antonius?

READING 10 ---

SUMMARY

Brutus and Cassius reunite in joy after having fled Italy separately in the aftermath of Cæsar's assassination. Together, they have raised a formidable amount of money and military strength to wage the civil war against young Cæsar, Antonius, and Lepidus. After their meeting, they part again to fight in different locations.

FROM PLUTARCH

Use the video for reading 10 to guide you through the following text:

When the news of these events reached Macedonia, Brutus, compelled by circumstances, wrote to Hortensius to put Caius Antonius to death, on the ground of avenging Brutus and Cicero, the one being his friend, and the other both a friend and kinsman. This was the reason why Antonius, when he afterwards took Hortensius at Philippi, put him to death on the tomb of his brother. Brutus says that he felt more shame at the cause of Cicero's death than sympathy at his misfortune, and that he blamed his friends in Rome, for they were slain more through their own fault than that of the tyrants, and that they submitted to see and to witness what it should have been intolerable for them even to hear. Brutus, having taken his army over to Asia, which

was now a considerable force, set about fitting out a naval force in Bithynia and in the neighborhood of Cyzicus, and himself moving about with his troops settled the cities and had interviews with the rulers, and he sent to Cassius into Syria to recall him from Egypt, for he said that it was not to get dominion, but to deliver their country that they were rambling about and collecting a force with which they would put down the tyrants; that they ought therefore, remembering and keeping in mind this purpose, not to hold themselves far from Italy, but to hasten thither and to aid the citizens. Cassius obeyed, and Brutus met him on his return, and they fell in with one another near Smyrna; for the first time since they had separated in Peiraeus and set out, the one for Syria, the other for Macedonia. They had accordingly great pleasure and confidence owing to the force which each had. For they had hurried from Italy like the most despicable fugitives, without money and without arms, without a single ship, a single soldier, or a city, and yet after no very long interval they had come together with ships and troops and horses and money, able to struggle for the supremacy of the Romans.

Now Cassius was desirous to have and to allow an equal share of honor, but Brutus herein anticipated him by generally going to Cassius who, in age, was his superior, and in body was not able to sustain equal toil. The opinion was that Cassius was skilled in military matters, but was violent in passion and governed mainly by fear, while towards his intimates he was too much inclined to use ridicule and was too fond of jesting. As to Brutus, they say that he was esteemed by the many for his virtues, but loved by his friends, admired by the nobles, and not hated even by his enemies, because the man was extraordinarily mild and high-minded and unmoved by anger, pleasure or love of aggrandizement, and kept his judgment upright and unbending in the maintenance of honor and justice. That which got him most goodwill and reputation was the faith which men had in his motives. For neither that great Pompeius, if he had put down Cæsar, was confidently expected to give up his power to the laws, but to retain affairs in his hands, pacifying the people with the name of consulship and dictatorship or some other

title with more pleasing name, and this Cassius, who was a violent and passionate man and was often carried away from justice in quest of gain, more than any one else they thought would carry on war, and ramble about and expose himself to danger for the purpose of getting power for himself, not liberty for the citizens. For as to the men of still earlier times, the Cinnas and Marii and Carbos, they viewed their country as a prize and booty for competition and all but in express words fought to get a tyranny. But as to Brutus, they say that not even his enemies imputed to him such a change in his purpose, but that many persons had heard Antonius say he thought Brutus was the only person who conspired against Cæsar because of being moved by the splendor and apparent noble nature of the deed, and that the rest combined against the man because they hated and envied him. Accordingly it appears from what Brutus says that he trusted not so much in his power as in his virtues. He wrote to Atticus, when he was just approaching the danger, that his affairs were in the best plight as to fortune, for that he should either get the victory and free the Roman people, or should die and be released from slavery; though everything else was safe and secure for them, one thing was uncertain, whether they should live and be free or die. He says that Marcus Antonius was paying a just penalty for his folly, for while he might have been numbered with the Bruti and Cassii and Catos, he made himself an appendage to Octavius, and if he should not be defeated with him, he would shortly after have to fight against him. Now he seems, in saying this, to have well divined what was to happen.

While they were then in Smyrna, Brutus claimed a share of the money which Cassius had collected to a great amount, for Brutus alleged that he had expended all his own resources in building so great a fleet with which they would command all the internal sea. But the friends of Cassius were not for letting him give up the money, saying, "What you save by economy and get with odium, it is not fair that he should take and apply to gaining popularity and gratifying the soldiers." However, Cassius gave him a third part of all. Separating again to their several undertakings, Cassius, after taking

Rhodes, did not conduct himself with moderation, but made this answer at his entrance to those who addressed him as king and lord: "I am neither king nor lord but the executioner and punisher of lord and king." Brutus demanded of the Lycians money and men. When Naucrates the demagogue persuaded the cities to revolt and the people occupied certain heights to prevent Brutus from passing, in the first place he sent cavalry against them when they were eating, who killed 600 of them, and in the next place taking possession of the posts and forts, he released all the people without ransom with the view of gaining over the nation by kindness. But the people were obstinate, being enraged at what they had suffered, and despising his moderation and humanity, till at last Brutus drove into Xanthas the most warlike of the Lycians, and blockaded them there. Some of them attempted to escape by swimming under the river which flowed by the city: but they were caught by nets which were sunk in the channel to the bottom, and the tops of the nets had bells attached to them which gave a signal as soon as any one was caught. The Xanthians, making a sally by night, threw fire on certain engines and when they were driven back into the town by the Romans who perceived them, and a strong wind began to blow against the battlements the flame which was laying hold of the adjoining houses, Brutus, who feared for the city, ordered his soldiers to help to extinguish the fire.

NARRATION

Explain how Brutus' motives for assassinating Cæsar differed from the other conspirators'.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Compare Brutus to Cassius. How are they similar? How are they different?
2. Which would you rather have had as a leader? Why?

side until Pompeius was defeated in battle. Afterwards, Brutus joined Cæsar's side.

Porcia, the daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus, Porcia was a philosopher and was very devoted to her husband.

Servilia, the half-sister of Cato and the mother of Brutus.

“**Young Cæsar**”, the frequent designation for Octavian (later named Augustus) Cæsar, who was the son of Julius Cæsar's niece but was adopted by him as his son and heir. He formed the second triumvirate with Marcus Antonius and Lepidus but later concentrated power in himself alone and became the first emperor of Rome.

GLOSSARY OF ROMAN GOVERNMENTAL OFFICES

Ædile. A government official in charge of public buildings. He was also the chief of police.

Consul. Two consuls were elected each year. They ruled together with supreme authority over the republic. (They were like American presidents except that their term of office was only one year, and there were two of them.)

Dictator. In times of emergency, the Romans would elect one person to the office of dictator. While this person was in office there were no consuls, and he had absolute authority over the republic, but the length of his term was supposed to be limited to six months. Julius Cæsar was the last person to have the title.

Proconsul. A governor or military commander of a province. The office was often held by someone who had been a consul.