

CASCA

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds:
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.
A common slave—you know him well by sight—
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches join'd, and yet his hand,
Not sensible of fire, remain'd unscorch'd.
Besides—I ha' not since put up my sword—
Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me, and went surly by,
Without annoying me: and there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,
Transformed with their fear; who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say
'These are their reasons; they are natural;'
For, I believe, they are portentous things
Unto the climate that they point upon.

CASCA

Aren't you disturbed when the entire earth shakes
as if it were unsteady? Oh, Cicero, I've seen storms
with gusting winds that have split ancient oak trees.
And I've seen the ocean swell, rage, and foam, as
if it wanted to rise all the way to the dark clouds
above. But not until tonight—not until now—have I
ever seen a storm that drops fire. Either there is a
civil war in heaven, or the world—too disrespectful
toward the gods—angers them so much that they
send destruction. A common slave—you'd
recognize him—held up his left hand, which flamed
and burned with the strength of twenty torches. And
yet his hand did not feel the fire and was not
scorched. In addition—I haven't sheathed my
sword since seeing this—across from the Capitol I
saw a lion who stared at me and then walked by
without harming me. And there were a hundred
frightened women all clustered together, who swore
they saw men covered in fire walk up and down the
streets. And yesterday the owl sat hooting and
shrieking in the marketplace at noon. When all
these strange things happen at the same time, men
should not say, "Here are the reasons why this is
happening; it's all natural and normal." I believe
these are omens regarding what will happen in the
place where they occur, right here in Rome.

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EVERY GREAT SHOW STARTS HERE