

5-2016

Caligula

Kelly Loughlin
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

ScholarWorks Citation

Loughlin, Kelly, "Caligula" (2016). *Honors Projects*. 585.
<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/honorsprojects/585>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research and Creative Practice at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

AUTHOR NAME: Kelly Loughlin

TITLE OF SHOW: Caligula

FORMAT: Animation; 30 mins.

GENRE: Edgy Comedy; Political Comedy; Historical Fiction

INTENDED DEMOGRAPHIC: Young Adult, 16 - 24; fans of *Rick and Morty*, *BoJack Horseman*, *VEEP*, *House of Cards*, and *Game of Thrones*

LOGLINE: Rome's newest young emperor causes trouble when his massive ego offends the gods.

TREATMENT: Caligula, only twenty-one years old, is crowned the new emperor of Rome after the death of his great-uncle Emperor Tiberius. With his Trump-like ego and hot temper, democracy takes a backseat to his political antics. When he claims to be a god, Jupiter descends from Mount Olympus to punish the young emperor for his heresy. However, he refuses to respect even the king of the gods, and creates chaos when Jupiter decrees the gods can now openly meddle in earthly affairs until Caligula rescinds his claim.

Lank, physically weak, and egotistical, Caligula clings to his newfound power. The nuances of politics are lost on him as he bull-headedly leads Rome through its conflicts. Stultus, one of the emperor's consuls, is one of the few willing to risk disagreeing with the emperor. Even with Rome's well-being at stake, not many are brave enough to question the emperor's commands, especially with his habit of executing dissenters. Quiet, meek, and gentle-hearted, Stultus must push past his own introversion and hate of conflict to sway the emperor away from impulsive, irrational decisions. Caligula secretly admires Stultus for occasionally standing up for himself, but is not hesitant to throw his friend and employee under the proverbial bus should the need arise.

Caligula's horse, Incitatus, also serves as the emperor's consul. He lives in a marble stall inside the palace and accompanies Caligula in his daily duties. His intelligent eyes and engaged demeanor show he is no ordinary horse. Incitatus is actually Bacchus, Roman god of wine and festivities, in disguise; he watches over the emperor and sneakily uses divine intervention when godly troubles arise. Although he does not know the extent of the situation, Stultus can tell Incitatus is wiser than he appears, but still has trouble asking a horse for help when it's needed.

Jupiter, king of the Roman gods, lives in the godly realm of Mount Olympus. When he hears Caligula proclaim to be a god, he angrily transports the emperor to his stormy kingdom, hoping to intimidate Caligula into an apology. Their inferiority complexes clash, and Caligula insults Jupiter, fostering a bitter feud between the two rulers. In a fit of rage, Jupiter rescinds his decree that gods must not openly meddle in human affairs. The gates of Mount Olympus open, and the countless Roman deities descend to earth, eager to directly interact with the mortals who pray to them. Jupiter intends the interference of the gods to be a punishment to Rome, but most of the gods care less about unleashing heavenly vengeance and care more about the devotion mortals are eager to give to their favorite gods. Jupiter attempts to kill Caligula six months into his reign, which temporarily transports him to Hell; however, mythological hero Orpheus saves him and returns him to the world of the living.

Minerva and Diana, two of the most famous Roman deities, forego their heavenly home in Mount Olympus and settle as roommates in one of Rome's nicer districts. They are accustomed to unwavering devotion from mortals, and are taken aback when their human neighbors are less than thrilled to have them move in. The goddesses must learn to keep their awesome powers and tempers in check before they accidentally destroy their new neighborhood.

Minerva, goddess of wisdom, seeks out the company of Rome's greatest minds. However, she is unable to see the distinction between disagreement and insult, and losing an argument can end disastrously. Her roommate Diana, goddess of the hunt, fills their home with a menagerie of mythological creatures like a crazy cat lady. For fun, she engages in Rome's gladiatorial games, and inadvertently threatens the masculinity of the greatest warriors in the empire.

Despite his hunger for power, Caligula has a suppressed bitterness about his emperorship. Caligula was born Gaius, youngest of five boys with three younger sisters. His father, Germanicus, was a military leader and nephew of Emperor Tiberius. His wife Agrippina the Elder and their children accompanied him on the military's travels. When Gaius was two years old, their family was taken hostage by a mutiny of one of the legions. However, the mutinous forces let them go at the ridiculous sight of toddler Gaius in full military uniform. This earned him the nickname "Caligula", which is Latin for "little boots", in regards to his small military shoes. He loathes the nickname, but also hates the name "Gaius" as it is a very common Latin name. At seven, Caligula's father dies and the family returns to Rome, which creates paranoia for Tiberius. At eighteen, Caligula's mother and two living brothers are accused of plotting against Emperor Tiberius and executed. Orphaned and leaving his three younger sisters behind, Caligula feigned to be unfazed by the murder of his family. Tiberius favored him for his emotional callousness, and named Caligula his heir. Tiberius further molded Caligula in his image, saying he "was rearing a viper for the Roman people".

At twenty-one, most of Rome is happy about Caligula's ascension; Tiberius was not well-liked. The first six months of his reign, he is beloved by the citizens and the senate. He returns to the world of the living after Jupiter sends him to Hell and is deeply changed. During his brief time in Hell, he was able to speak with his dead relatives, but only in a way similar to passing a phone around to different people as their souls are not bound to bodies. He shows emotional vulnerability for the first time as he talks with his dead mother, who is excited to hear from him. Agrippina the Elder offers for her son to chat with "Uncle Tiberius", which greatly angers Caligula. He demands to know how she can associate with Tiberius in the spirit world since she and his brothers are dead because of him. She encourages Caligula to move on because she has forgiven Tiberius for having them executed. Caligula realizes his mother is happier in Hell than she ever was on earth, because she is spending eternity schmoozing with history's greatest dead figures and is reunited with Caligula's father and favored older brothers. Caligula is rescued but returns deeply disturbed and even more unhinged, ushering in the reign of "Crazy Caligula".

END.

CONTACT:

Kelly Loughlin

loughlinkelly@yahoo.com

(574) 323 - 7988