

Antony and Cleopatra

2.6

*Flourish. Enter Pompey and Menas at one door,
with a drummer and a trumpeter; at another,
Caesar, Lepidus, Antony, Enobarbus, Maecenas,
Agrippa, with soldiers marching*

POMPEY

Your hostages I have, so have you mine,
And we shall talk before we fight.

CAESAR

Most meet

That first we come to words, and therefore have we
Our written purposes before us sent,
Which if thou hast considered, let us know 5
If 'twill tie up thy discontented sword
And carry back to Sicily much tall youth
That else must perish here.

POMPEY

To you all three,

The senators alone of this great world,
Chief factors for the gods: I do not know 10
Wherefore my father should revengers want,
Having a son and friends, since Julius Caesar,
Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,
There saw you labouring for him. What was't
That moved pale Cassius to conspire? And what 15
Made the all-honoured, honest Roman Brutus,
With the armed rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,
To drench the Capitol but that they would
Have one man but a man? And that is it
Hath made me rig my navy, at whose burden 20
The angered ocean foams; with which I meant
To scourge th'ingratitude that spiteful Rome
Cast on my noble father.

CAESAR

Take your time.

ANTONY

Thou canst not fear us, Pompey, with thy sails.
We'll speak with thee at sea. At land thou know'st 25
How much we do o'ercount thee.

POMPEY

At land indeed

Thou dost o'ercount me of my father's house,
But since the cuckoo builds not for himself,
Remain in't as thou mayst.

LEPIDUS Be pleased to tell us±±
For this is from the present±±how you take 30
The offers we have sent you.

CAESAR There's the point.
ANTONY

Which do not be entreated to, but weigh
What it is worth, embraced.

CAESAR And what may follow,
To try a larger fortune?

POMPEY You have made me offer
Of Sicily, Sardinia; and I must 35
Rid all the sea of pirates; then to send
Measures of wheat to Rome; this 'greed upon,
To part with unhacked edges, and bear back
Our targes undinted.

CAESAR, ANTONY, AND LEPIDUS That's our offer.

POMPEY

Know, then,
I came before you here a man prepared 40
To take this offer. But Mark Antony
Put me to some impatience. Though I lose
The praise of it by telling, you must know,
When Caesar and your brother were at blows,
Your mother came to Sicily, and did find 45
Her welcome friendly.

ANTONY I have heard it, Pompey,
And am well studied for a liberal thanks
Which I do owe you.

POMPEY Let me have your hand.
Pompey and Antony shake hands
I did not think, sir, to have met you here.

ANTONY
The beds i'th' East are soft; and thanks to you, 50
That called me timelier than my purpose hither;
For I have gained by't.

CAESAR (to Pompey) Since I saw you last
There is a change upon you.

POMPEY Well, I know not
What counts harsh fortune casts upon my face,
But in my bosom shall she never come 55
To make my heart her vassal.

LEPIDUS Well met here.

POMPEY
I hope so, Lepidus. Thus we are agreed.
I crave our composition may be written
And sealed between us.

CAESAR That's the next to do.

POMPEY
We'll feast each other ere we part, and let's 60
Draw lots who shall begin.

ANTONY That will I, Pompey.

POMPEY No, Antony, take the lot.
But, first or last, your fine Egyptian cookery
Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar 65
Grew fat with feasting there.

ANTONY You have heard much.

POMPEY I have fair meanings, sir.

ANTONY And fair words to them.

POMPEY Then so much have I heard,
And I have heard Apollodorus carried±± 70

ENOBARBUS
No more o' that, he did so.

POMPEY What, I pray you?

ENOBARBUS
A certain queen to Caesar in a mattress.

POMPEY
I know thee now. How far'st thou, soldier?

ENOBARBUS
Well, and well am like to do, for I perceive
Four feasts are toward.

POMPEY Let me shake thy hand. 75
Pompey and Enobarbus shake hands
I never hated thee. I have seen thee fight
When I have envied thy behaviour.

ENOBARBUS
Sir, I never loved you much, but I ha' praised ye
When you have well deserved ten times as much
As I have said you did. 80

POMPEY

Enjoy thy plainness. It nothing ill becomes thee.

Aboard my galley I invite you all.

Will you lead, lords?

CAESAR, ANTONY, AND LEPIDUS Show's the way, sir.

POMPEY

Come.

Exeunt all but Enobarbus and Menas

MENAS (*aside*)

Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er have made this
treaty.

(*To Enobarbus*) You and I have known, sir. 85

ENOBARBUS At sea, I think.

MENAS We have, sir.

ENOBARBUS You have done well by water.

MENAS And you by land.

ENOBARBUS I will praise any man that will praise me, 90
though it cannot be denied what I have done by land.

MENAS Nor what I have done by water.

ENOBARBUS Yes, something you can deny for your own
safety. You have been a great thief by sea.

MENAS And you by land. 95

ENOBARBUS There I deny my land service; but give me
your hand, Menas. If our eyes had authority, here they
might take two thieves kissing.

They shake hands

MENAS All men's faces are true, whatsome'er their hands
are. 100

ENOBARBUS But there is never a fair woman has a true
face.

MENAS No slander; they steal hearts.

ENOBARBUS We came hither to fight with you.

MENAS For my part, I am sorry it is turned to a drinking. 105
Pompey doth this day laugh away his fortune.

ENOBARBUS If he do, sure he cannot weep't back again.

MENAS You've said, sir. We looked not for Mark Antony
here. Pray you, is he married to Cleopatra?

ENOBARBUS Caesar's sister is called Octavia. 110

MENAS True, sir. She was the wife of Caius Marcellus.

ENOBARBUS But she is now the wife of Marcus Antonius.

MENAS Pray ye, sir?

ENOBARBUS 'Tis true.

MENAS Then is Caesar and he for ever knit together. 115

ENOBARBUS If I were bound to divine of this unity I would
not prophesy so.

MENAS I think the policy of that purpose made more in
the marriage than the love of the parties.

ENOBARBUS I think so, too. But you shall find the band 120
that seems to tie their friendship together will be the
very strangler of their amity. Octavia is of a holy, cold,
and still conversation.

MENAS Who would not have his wife so?

ENOBARBUS Not he that himself is not so, which is Mark 125
Antony. He will to his Egyptian dish again; then shall
the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as
I said before, that which is the strength of their amity
shall prove the immediate author of their variance.
Antony will use his affection where it is. He married 130
but his occasion here.

MENAS And thus it may be. Come, sir, will you aboard?
I have a health for you.

ENOBARBUS I shall take it, sir. We have used our throats
in Egypt. 135

MENAS Come, let's away.
Exeunt