

Antony and Cleopatra

4.15

Enter Antony and Eros

ANTONY

Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

EROS

Ay, noble lord.

ANTONY

Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A towered citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory 5
With trees upon't that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.

EROS

Ay, my lord.

ANTONY

That which is now a horse even with a thought
The rack distains, and makes it indistinct 10
As water is in water.

EROS

It does, my lord.

ANTONY

My good knave Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body. Here I am Antony,
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.
I made these wars for Egypt, and the Queen±± 15
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine,
Which whilst it was mine had annexed unto't
A million more, now lost±±she, Eros, has
Packed cards with Caesar, and false-played my glory
Unto an enemy's triumph. 20
Nay, weep not, gentle Eros. There is left us
Ourselves to end ourselves.

Enter Mardian

O thy vile lady,

She has robbed me of my sword!

MARDIAN

No, Antony,

My mistress loved thee, and her fortunes mingled
With thine entirely.

ANTONY Hence, saucy eunuch, peace! 25
She hath betrayed me, and shall die the death.

MARDIAN
Death of one person can be paid but once,
And that she has discharged. What thou wouldst do
Is done unto thy hand. The last she spake
Was `Antony, most noble Antony!' 30
Then in the midst a tearing groan did break
The name of Antony. It was divided
Between her heart and lips. She rendered life,
Thy name so buried in her.

ANTONY Dead, then?

MARDIAN Dead.

ANTONY
Unarm, Eros. The long day's task is done, 35
And we must sleep. (*To Mardian*) That thou depart'st
hence safe
Does pay thy labour richly. Go.
Exit Mardian

Off,
pluck off.

Eros helps Antony to unarm
The seven-fold shield of Ajax cannot keep
The battery from my heart. O, cleave, my sides!
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent; 40
Crack thy frail case. Apace, Eros, apace.
No more a soldier. Bruise Ád pieces, go;
You have been nobly borne. ±±From me a while.
Exit Eros

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now 45
All length is torture. Since the torch is out,
Lie down, and stray no farther. Now all labour
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles
Itself with strength. Seal, then, and all is done.
Eros! ±±I come, my queen. ±±Eros! ±±Stay for me. 50
Where souls do couch on flowers we'll hand in hand,
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze.
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours. Come, Eros, Eros!

Enter Eros

EROS

What would my lord?

ANTONY

Since Cleopatra died

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I have lived in such dishonour that the gods
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
Quartered the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
The courage of a woman; less noble mind
Than she which by her death our Caesar tells
'I am conqueror of myself.' Thou art sworn, Eros,
That when the exigent should come, which now
Is come indeed—when I should see behind me
Th'inevitable prosecution of
Disgrace and horror—that on my command
Thou then wouldst kill me. Do't. The time is come.
Thou strik'st not me; 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.
Put colour in thy cheek.

60

65

EROS

The gods withhold me!

Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,
Though enemy, lost aim and could not?

70

ANTONY

Eros,

Wouldst thou be windowed in great Rome and see
Thy master thus with pleached arms, bending down
His corrigible neck, his face subdued
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheeled seat
Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
His baseness that ensued?

75

EROS

I would not see't.

ANTONY

Come then; for with a wound I must be cured.
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
Most useful for thy country.

EROS

O sir, pardon me!

80

ANTONY

When I did make thee free, swor'st thou not then
To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once,
Or thy precedent services are all
But accidents unpurposed. Draw, and come.

EROS

Turn from me then that noble countenance
 Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

ANTONY (*turning away*) Lo thee!

EROS
 My sword is drawn.

ANTONY Then let it do at once
 The thing why thou hast drawn it.

EROS My dear master,
 My captain, and my Emperor: let me say, 90
 Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.

ANTONY 'Tis said, man; and farewell.

EROS
 Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?

ANTONY Now,
 Eros.

[Eros stabs himself]

EROS
 Why, there then, thus I do escape the sorrow
 Of Antony's death.
He dies

ANTONY Thrice nobler than myself, 95
 Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
 I should and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
 Have by their brave instruction got upon me
 A nobleness in record. But I will be
 A bridegroom in my death, and run into't 100
 As to a lover's bed. Come then, and, Eros,
 Thy master dies thy scholar. To do thus
 I learned of thee.
He stabs himself

How, not dead? Not dead?
 The guard, ho! O, dispatch me!
Enter a guard [and Decretas]

FIRST GUARD What's the noise?

ANTONY
 I have done my work ill, friends. O, make an end 105
 Of what I have begun!

SECOND GUARD The star is fall'n.

FIRST GUARD
 And time is at his period.

ALL THE GUARDS

Alas

And woe!

ANTONY Let him that loves me strike me dead.

FIRST GUARD

Not I.

SECOND GUARD Nor I.

THIRD GUARD Nor anyone.

Exeunt the guard

DECRETAS

Thy death and fortunes bid thy followers fly. 110

He takes Antony's sword

This sword but shown to Caesar, with this tidings,
Shall enter me with him.

Enter Diomedes

DIOMEDES Where's Antony?

DECRETAS

There, Diomed, there.

DIOMEDES Lives he? Wilt thou not answer, man?

Exit Decretas

ANTONY

Art thou there, Diomed? Draw thy sword, and give me
Sufficing strokes for death.

DIOMEDES Most absolute lord, 115

My mistress Cleopatra sent me to thee.

ANTONY

When did she send thee?

DIOMEDES Now, my lord.

ANTONY Where is she?

DIOMEDES

Locked in her monument. She had a prophesying fear
Of what hath come to pass; for when she saw±±
Which never shall be found±±you did suspect 120
She had disposed with Caesar, and that your rage
Would not be purged, she sent word she was dead;
But fearing since how it might work, hath sent
Me to proclaim the truth; and I am come,
I dread, too late. 125

ANTONY

Too late, good Diomed. Call my guard, I prithee.

DIOMEDES

What ho, the Emperor's guard! The guard, what ho!

Come, your lord calls.

Enter four or five of the guard of Antony

ANTONY

Bear me, good friends, where Cleopatra bides.

'Tis the last service that I shall command you.

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FIRST GUARD

Woe, woe are we, sir, you may not live to wear

All your true followers out.

ALL THE GUARDS

Most heavy day!

ANTONY

Nay, good my fellows, do not please sharp fate

To grace it with your sorrows. Bid that welcome

Which comes to punish us, and we punish it,

135

Seeming to bear it lightly. Take me up.

I have led you oft; carry me now, good friends,

And have my thanks for all.

Exeunt bearing Antony [and Eros]