

Antony and Cleopatra

1.3

Enter Cleopatra, Charmian, Alexas, and Iras

CLEOPATRA

Where is he?

CHARMIAN I did not see him since.

CLEOPATRA *[to Alexas]*

See where he is, who's with him, what he does.

I did not send you. If you find him sad,

Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report

That I am sudden sick. Quick, and return.

5

Exit [Alexas]

CHARMIAN

Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,

You do not hold the method to enforce

The like from him.

CLEOPATRA What should I do I do not?

CHARMIAN

In each thing give him way; cross him in nothing.

CLEOPATRA

Thou teachest like a fool, the way to lose him.

10

CHARMIAN

Tempt him not so too far. Iwis, forbear.

In time we hate that which we often fear.

Enter Antony

But here comes Antony.

CLEOPATRA I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY

I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose.

CLEOPATRA

Help me away, dear Charmian, I shall fall.

15

It cannot be thus long±±the sides of nature

Will not sustain it.

ANTONY Now, my dearest queen.

CLEOPATRA

Pray you, stand farther from me.

ANTONY

What's the matter?

CLEOPATRA

I know by that same eye there's some good news.

What says the married woman±±you may go? 20
Would she had never given you leave to come.
Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here.
I have no power upon you; hers you are.

ANTONY

The gods best know±±

CLEOPATRA

O, never was there queen

So mightily betrayed! Yet at the first 25
I saw the treasons planted.

ANTONY

Cleopatra±±

CLEOPATRA

Why should I think you can be mine and true±±
Though you in swearing shake the throneÁd gods±±
Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,
To be entangled with those mouth-made vows 30
Which break themselves in swearing.

ANTONY

Most sweet queen±±

CLEOPATRA

Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,
But bid farewell and go. When you sued staying,
Then was the time for words; no going then.
Eternity was in our lips and eyes, 35
Bliss in our brow's bent; none our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven. They are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turned the greatest liar.

ANTONY

How now, lady!

CLEOPATRA

I would I had thy inches. Thou shouldst know 40
There were a heart in Egypt.

ANTONY

Hear me, Queen.

The strong necessity of time commands
Our services a while, but my full heart
Remains in use with you. Our Italy
Shines o'er with civil swords. Sextus Pompeius 45
Makes his approaches to the port of Rome.
Equality of two domestic powers
Breed scrupulous faction. The hated, grown to
strength,
Are newly grown to love. The condemned Pompey,

Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace 50
Into the hearts of such as have not thrived
Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;
And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge
By any desperate change. My more particular,
And that which most with you should save my going, 55
Is Fulvia's death.

CLEOPATRA

Though age from folly could not give me freedom,
It does from childishness. Can Fulvia die?

ANTONY She's dead, my queen.

He offers letters

Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read 60
The garboils she awaked. At the last, best,
See when and where she died.

CLEOPATRA O most false love!

Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill
With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,
In Fulvia's death how mine received shall be. 65

ANTONY

Quarrel no more, but be prepared to know
The purposes I bear, which are or cease
As you shall give th'advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier-servant, making peace or war 70
As thou affects.

CLEOPATRA Cut my lace, Charmian, come.

But let it be. I am quickly ill and well;
So Antony loves.

ANTONY My precious queen, forbear,
And give true evidence to his love, which stands
An honourable trial.

CLEOPATRA So Fulvia told me. 75

I prithee turn aside and weep for her,
Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears
Belong to Egypt. Good now, play one scene
Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
Like perfect honour.

ANTONY You'll heat my blood. No more. 80

CLEOPATRA

You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

ANTONY

Now by my sword±±

CLEOPATRA

And target. Still he mends.

But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,
How this Herculean Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe. 85

ANTONY I'll leave you, lady.

CLEOPATRA Courteous lord, one word.

Sir, you and I must part; but that's not it.
Sir, you and I have loved; but there's not it;
That you know well. Something it is I would±± 90
O, my oblivion is a very Antony,
And I am all forgotten.

ANTONY But that your royalty
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you
For idleness itself.

CLEOPATRA 'Tis sweating labour

To bear such idleness so near the heart 95
As Cleopatra this. But sir, forgive me,
Since my becomings kill me when they do not
Eye well to you. Your honour calls you hence,
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,
And all the gods go with you. Upon your sword 100
Sit laurel victory, and smooth success
Be strewed before your feet.

ANTONY Let us go.

Come. Our separation so abides and flies
That thou residing here goes yet with me,
And I hence fleeting, here remain with thee. 105
Away.

Exeunt severally