

Antony and Cleopatra

4.16

Enter Cleopatra [and her maids aloft], with Charmian and Iras

CLEOPATRA

O Charmian, I will never go from hence.

CHARMIAN

Be comforted, dear madam.

CLEOPATRA

No, I will not.

All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise. Our size of sorrow,
Proportioned to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.

5

Enter Diomedes [below]

How now? Is he dead?

DIOMEDES

His death's upon him, but not dead.
Look out o'th' other side your monument.
His guard have brought him thither.

Enter below Antony, borne by the guard

CLEOPATRA

O sun,

Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in; darkling stand
The varying shore o'th' world! O Antony,
Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian,
Help, Iras, help, help, friends below!
Let's draw him hither.

10

ANTONY

Peace. Not Caesar's valour

Hath o'erthrown Antony, but Antony's
Hath triumphed on itself.

15

CLEOPATRA

So it should be,

That none but Antony should conquer Antony.
But woe 'tis so!

ANTONY

I am dying, Egypt, dying. Only
I here importune death awhile until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

20

CLEOPATRA

I dare not, dear,

Dear, my lord, pardon. I dare not,
Lest I be taken. Nor th'imperious show
Of the full-fortuned Caesar ever shall 25
Be brooch'd with me, if knife, drugs, serpents, have
Edge, sting, or operation. I am safe.
Your wife, Octavia, with her modest eyes
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour
Demuring upon me. But come, come, Antony.±± 30
Help me, my women.±±We must draw thee up.
Assist, good friends.

ANTONY O quick, or I am gone!

CLEOPATRA

Here's sport indeed. How heavy weighs my lord!
Our strength is all gone into heaviness,
That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power 35
The strong-winged Mercury should fetch thee up
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little.
Wishers were ever fools. O come, come, come!
They heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra
And welcome, welcome! Die when thou hast lived,
Quicken with kissing. Had my lips that power, 40
Thus would I wear them out.

They kiss

ALL THE LOOKERS-ON A heavy sight.

ANTONY I am dying, Egypt, dying.

Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.

CLEOPATRA

No, let me speak, and let me rail so high 45
That the false hussy Fortune break her wheel,
Provoked by my offence.

ANTONY One word, sweet queen.

Of Caesar seek your honour, with your safety. O!

CLEOPATRA

They do not go together.

ANTONY Gentle, hear me.

None about Caesar trust but Proculeius. 50

CLEOPATRA

My resolution and my hands I'll trust,
None about Caesar.

ANTONY

The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes, 55
Wherein I lived the greatest prince o'th' world,
The noblest; and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman; a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquished. Now my spirit is going; 60
I can no more.

CLEOPATRA Noblest of men, woot die?
Hast thou no care of me? Shall I abide
In this dull world, which in thy absence is
No better than a sty?

Antony dies

O see, my women,
The crown o'th' earth doth melt. My lord! 65
O, withered is the garland of the war.
The soldier's pole is fall'n. Young boys and girls
Are level now with men. The odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon. 70

She falls

CHARMIAN O, quietness, lady!

IRAS She's dead, too, our sovereign.

CHARMIAN

Lady!

IRAS Madam!

CHARMIAN O, madam, madam, madam!

IRAS

Royal Egypt, Empress!

CHARMIAN Peace, peace, Iras!

CLEOPATRA *(recovering)*

No more but e'en a woman, and commanded 75
By such poor passion as the maid that milks
And does the meanest chores. It were for me
To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods,
To tell them that this world did equal theirs
Till they had stol'n our jewel. All's but naught. 80
Patience is sottish, and impatience does
Become a dog that's mad. Then is it sin

To rush into the secret house of death
Ere death dare come to us? How do you, women?
What, what, good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian? 85
My noble girls! Ah, women, women! Look,
Our lamp is spent, it's out. Good sirs, take heart;
We'll bury him, and then what's brave, what's noble,
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make death proud to take us. Come, away. 90
This case of that huge spirit now is cold.
Ah, women, women! Come. We have no friend
But resolution, and the briefest end.
Exeunt, those above bearing off Antony's body