

# Antony and Cleopatra

## 2.1

*Enter Pompey, Menecrates, and Menas, in warlike manner*

**POMPEY**

If the great gods be just, they shall assist  
The deeds of justest men.

**[MENECRATES]** Know, worthy Pompey,  
That what they do delay they not deny.

**POMPEY**

Whiles we are suitors to their throne, decays  
The thing we sue for.

**[MENECRATES]** We, ignorant of ourselves, 5  
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers  
Deny us for our good; so find we profit  
By losing of our prayers.

**POMPEY**

I shall do well.

The people love me, and the sea is mine.  
My powers are crescent, and my auguring hope 10  
Says it will come to th' full. Mark Antony  
In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make  
No wars without doors. Caesar gets money where  
He loses hearts. Lepidus flatters both,  
Of both is flattered; but he neither loves, 15  
Nor either cares for him.

**[MENAS]** Caesar and Lepidus  
Are in the field; a mighty strength they carry.

**POMPEY**

Where have you this? 'Tis false.

**[MENAS]** From Silvius, sir.

**POMPEY**

He dreams. I know they are in Rome together,  
Looking for Antony. But all the charms of love, 20  
Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip.  
Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both  
Tie up the libertine, in a field of feasts  
Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks  
Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite, 25

That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour  
Even till a Lethe'd dullness±±

*Enter Varrius*

## How now, Varrius?

## VARRIUS

This is most certain that I shall deliver:

# Mark Antony is every hour in Rome

Expected. Since he went from Egypt, 'tis 30

A space for farther travel.

# POMPEY

I could have given less matter

A better ear. Menas, I did not think

This amorous surfeiter would have donned his helm

For such a petty war. His soldiership

Is twice the other twain. But let us rear 35

The higher our opinion, that our stirring

Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck

The ne'er lust-wearied Antony.

# MENAS

I cannot hope

Caesar and Antony shall well greet together.

His wife that's dead did trespasses to Caesar, 40

His brother warred upon him, although, I think,

Not moved by Antony.

# POMPEY

I know not, Menas,

How lesser enmities may give way to greater.

Were't not that we stand up against them all,

'Twere pregnant they should square between

themselves. 45

For they have entertained a cause enough

To draw their swords. But how the fear of us

May cement their divisions, and bind up

The petty difference, we yet not know.

Be't as our gods will have't; it only stands

Our lives upon to use our strongest hands.

Come, Menas.

*Exeunt*