

Antony and Cleopatra

1.1

Enter Demetrius and Philo

PHILO

Nay, but this dotage of our General's
O'erflows the measure. Those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glowed like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
The office and devotion of their view 5
Upon a tawny front. His captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gipsy's lust.

*Flourish. Enter Antony, Cleopatra, her ladies, the
train, with eunuchs fanning her*

Look where they come.

10

Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transformed
Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.

CLEOPATRA *(to Antony)*

If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

ANTONY

There's beggary in the love that can be reckoned. 15

CLEOPATRA

I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.

ANTONY

Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANTONY Grates me: the sum.

CLEOPATRA Nay, hear them, Antony. 20

Fulvia perchance is angry; or who knows
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
His powerful mandate to you: 'Do this, or this,
Take in that kingdom and enfranchise that.
Perform't, or else we damn thee.' 25

ANTONY How, my love?

CLEOPATRA Perchance? Nay, and most like.
You must not stay here longer. Your dismissal
Is come from Caesar, therefore hear it, Antony.
Where's Fulvia's process±±Caesar's, I would say±±
both? 30

Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,
Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
Is Caesar's homager; else so thy cheek pays shame
When shrill-tongued Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

ANTONY

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch 35
Of the ranged empire fall. Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay. Our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man. The nobleness of life
Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do't±±in which I bind 40
On pain of punishment the world to weet±±
We stand up peerless.

CLEOPATRA *[aside]* Excellent falsehood!
Why did he marry Fulvia and not love her?
I'll seem the fool I am not. *(To Antony)* Antony
Will be himself.

ANTONY But stirred by Cleopatra. 45
Now, for the love of Love and her soft hours
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh.
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now. What sport tonight?

CLEOPATRA

Hear the ambassadors.

ANTONY Fie, wrangling queen, 50
Whom everything becomes±±to chide, to laugh,
To weep; how every passion fully strives
To make itself, in thee, fair and admired!
No messenger but thine; and all alone
Tonight we'll wander through the streets and note 55
The qualities of people. Come, my queen.
Last night you did desire it. *(To the Messenger)* Speak
not to us.

Exeunt Antony and Cleopatra with the train,

[and by another door the Messenger]

DEMETRIUS

Is Caesar with Antonius prized so slight?

PHILO

Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony
He comes too short of that great property
Which still should go with Antony.

60

DEMETRIUS

I am full sorry

That he approves the common liar who
Thus speaks of him at Rome; but I will hope
Of better deeds tomorrow. Rest you happy.

Exeunt