

Antony and Cleopatra

2.7

Music plays. Enter two or three Servants with a banquet

FIRST SERVANT Here they'll be, man. Some o' their plants
are ill rooted already; the least wind i'th' world will
blow them down.

SECOND SERVANT Lepidus is high-coloured.

FIRST SERVANT They have made him drink alms-drink. 5

SECOND SERVANT As they pinch one another by the
disposition, he cries out `No more!'±±reconciles them
to his entreaty and himself to th' drink.

FIRST SERVANT But it raises the greater war between him
and his discretion. 10

SECOND SERVANT Why, this it is to have a name in great
men's fellowship. I had as lief have a reed that will do
me no service as a partisan I could not heave.

FIRST SERVANT To be called into a huge sphere and not
to be seen to move in't, are the holes where eyes should 15
be which pitifully disaster the cheeks.

*A sennet sounded. Enter Caesar, Antony, Pompey,
Lepidus, Agrippa, Maecenas, Enobarbus, and
Menas, with other captains [and a boy]*

ANTONY (to Caesar)

Thus do they, sir: they take the flow o'th' Nile
By certain scales i'th' pyramid. They know
By th' height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth
Or foison follow. The higher Nilus swells 20
The more it promises; as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes to harvest.

LEPIDUS You've strange serpents there?

ANTONY Ay, Lepidus. 25

LEPIDUS Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud
by the operation of your sun; so is your crocodile.

ANTONY They are so.

POMPEY

Sit, and some wine. A health to Lepidus!

[Antony, Pompey, and Lepidus sit]

LEPIDUS I am not so well as I should be, but I'll ne'er out. 30

ENOBARBUS Not till you have slept±±I fear me you'll be in
till then.

LEPIDUS Nay, certainly, I have heard the Ptolemies'
pyramises are very goodly things: without contra-
diction I have heard that. 35

MENAS *(aside to Pompey)*
Pompey, a word.

POMPEY *(aside to Menas)* Say in mine ear; what is't?

MENAS *(aside to Pompey)*
Forsake thy seat, I do beseech thee, captain,
And hear me speak a word.

POMPEY *(aside to Menas)* Forbear me till anon.
(Aloud) This wine for Lepidus!

Menas whispers in Pompey's ear

LEPIDUS What manner o' thing is your crocodile? 40

ANTONY It is shaped, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as
it hath breadth. It is just so high as it is, and moves
with it own organs. It lives by that which nourisheth
it, and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates.

LEPIDUS What colour is it of? 45

ANTONY Of it own colour, too.

LEPIDUS 'Tis a strange serpent.

ANTONY 'Tis so, and the tears of it are wet.

CAESAR *(to Antony)*
Will this description satisfy him?

ANTONY With the health that Pompey gives him; else he 50
is a very epicure.

POMPEY *(aside to Menas)*
Go hang, sir, hang! Tell me of that? Away,
Do as I bid you. *(Aloud)* Where's this cup I called for?

MENAS *(aside to Pompey)*
If for the sake of merit thou wilt hear me,
Rise from thy stool.

POMPEY *[rising]* I think thou'rt mad. The matter? 55
[Menas and Pompey stand apart]

MENAS
I have ever held my cap off to thy fortunes.

POMPEY

Thou hast served me with much faith. What's else to
say?

Be jolly, lords.

ANTONY These quicksands, Lepidus,
Keep off them, for you sink.

MENAS
Wilt thou be lord of all the world?

POMPEY What sayst thou?

60

MENAS
Wilt thou be lord of the whole world? That's twice.

POMPEY
How should that be?

MENAS But entertain it
And, though thou think me poor, I am the man
Will give thee all the world.

POMPEY Hast thou drunk well?

MENAS
No, Pompey, I have kept me from the cup. 65
Thou art, if thou dar'st be, the earthly Jove.
Whate'er the ocean pales or sky inclips
Is thine, if thou wilt ha't.

POMPEY Show me which way!

MENAS
These three world-sharers, these competitors,
Are in thy vessel. Let me cut the cable; 70
And when we are put off, fall to their throats.
All there is thine.

POMPEY Ah, this thou shouldst have done
And not have spoke on't. In me 'tis villainy,
In thee 't had been good service. Thou must know
'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour; 75
Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue
Hath so betrayed thine act. Being done unknown,
I should have found it afterwards well done,
But must condemn it now. Desist, and drink.

He returns to the others

MENAS (*aside*)
For this, I'll never follow thy palled fortunes more. 80
Who seeks and will not take when once 'tis offered,

Shall never find it more.

POMPEY This health to Lepidus!

ANTONY
Bear him ashore.±±I'll pledge it for him, Pompey.

ENOBARBUS
Here's to thee, Menas!

MENAS Enobarbus, welcome.

POMPEY
Fill till the cup be hid.
One lifts Lepidus, drunk, and carries him off

ENOBARBUS There's a strong fellow, Menas. 85

MENAS Why?

ENOBARBUS
A bears the third part of the world, man; seest not?

MENAS
The third part then is drunk. Would it were all,
That it might go on wheels.

ENOBARBUS Drink thou, increase the reels.

MENAS Come. 90

POMPEY
This is not yet an Alexandrian feast.

ANTONY
It ripens towards it. Strike the vessels, ho!
Here's to Caesar!

CAESAR I could well forbear't.
It's monstrous labour when I wash my brain,
An it grow fouler. 95

ANTONY Be a child o'th' time.

CAESAR Possess it, I'll make answer.
But I had rather fast from all, four days,
Than drink so much in one.

ENOBARBUS (to Antony) Ha, my brave Emperor,
Shall we dance now the Egyptian bacchanals, 100
And celebrate our drink?

POMPEY Let's ha't, good soldier.

ANTONY Come, let's all take hands
Till that the conquering wine hath steeped our sense
In soft and delicate Lethe.

ENOBARBUS All take hands. 105
Make battery to our ears with the loud music.
The while I'll place you, then the boy shall sing.

The holding every man shall beat as loud
As his strong sides can volley.

Music plays. Enobarbus places them hand in hand

[BOY] *(sings)*

Come, thou monarch of the vine, 110
Plumpy Bacchus, with pink eyne!
In thy vats our cares be drowned,
With thy grapes our hairs be crowned!
Cup us till the world go round,
Cup us till the world go round! 115

CAESAR

What would you more? Pompey, good night.
(To Antony)

Good-brother,

Let me request you off. Our graver business
Frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let's part.
You see we have burnt our cheeks. Strong Enobarb
Is weaker than the wine, and mine own tongue 120
Splits what it speaks. The wild disguise hath almost
Anticked us all. What needs more words? Good night.
Good Antony, your hand.

POMPEY

I'll try you on the shore.

ANTONY

And shall, sir. Give's your hand.

POMPEY

O Antony,

You have my father's house. But what, we are friends! 125
Come down into the boat.

Exeunt all but Enobarbus and Menas

ENOBARBUS

Take heed you fall not, Menas.

MENAS

I'll not on shore.

No, to my cabin. These drums, these trumpets, flutes,
what!

Let Neptune hear we bid a loud farewell
To these great fellows. Sound and be hanged, sound out! 130

Sound a flourish, with drums

ENOBARBUS *(throwing his cap in the air)*

Hoo, says a! There's my cap.

MENAS

Ho, noble captain, come!

Exeunt