

# Act 1 Scene 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

5 The office and devotion of their view  
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  
10 To cool a gypsy's lust.

*Flourish. Enter **ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her ladies, the train, with eunuchs fanning her***

Look where they  
come.  
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**

If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

**ANTONY**

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

**CLEOPATRA**

**DEMETRIUS** and **PHILO** enter.

**PHILO**

No, our general's infatuation is out of control. His eyes used to glow with pride when he reviewed his troops. Now his eyes devote themselves exclusively to a certain brown-skinned face. His heart used to burst the buckles on his breastplate in great fights, but now he's lost all temperance and dedicates his heart to satisfying the lust of an Egyptian whore.

*A trumpet fanfare announces the entrance of **ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her ladies and attendants, and eunuchs with fans.***

Look at them. Take a good look, and you'll see that one of the three men who rule the world has turned into a whore's jester. Look and see.

**CLEOPATRA**

If what you feel is really love, tell me how much.

**ANTONY**

It would be a pretty stingy love if it could be counted and calculated.

**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**

<sup>20</sup> Nay, hear them, Antony.

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.

<sup>25</sup> Perform 't, or else we damn thee."

**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?

I want to measure the extent of your love, to see how far it stretches.

**ANTONY**

Then you would have to go beyond heaven, beyond earth.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

I have news from Rome, my good lord.

**ANTONY**

Which irritates me. Give me a summary.

**CLEOPATRA**

No, listen to it, Antony. Perhaps [Fulvia](#) is angry with you. Who knows, maybe the [baby-faced Caesar](#) has orders  
for you: "Do this, do that; conquer that kingdom, liberate this one. Do it or we'll condemn you."

**ANTONY**

What, my love?

**CLEOPATRA**

Maybe? No, most likely. You can't stay here any longer. Caesar has sent your dismissal, so pay attention, Antony.  
Where's Fulvia's summons—excuse me, I should have said Caesar's. Or do Fulvia and Caesar both beckon you  
back to Rome? Call in the messengers and we'll find out. As surely as I am the queen of Egypt, Antony, you're  
blushing, which means you're Caesar's servant. Or that that bitch Fulvia still has the power to humiliate you. Call  
the messengers!

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**

Excellent falsehood!

Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?  
I'll seem the fool I am not. 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?

**ANTONY**

Let Rome be washed away in the Tiber and let the great empire fall. My place is here. Kingdoms are only dirt. The soil feeds animals as well as people, so how does having a kingdom separate humans from beasts? The noblest thing is to do what we're doing, particularly when the couple is as well matched as we are. I demand that the world admit we are the perfect couple or else suffer the consequences.

**CLEOPATRA**

(to herself) What an enormous lie! Why did he marry Fulvia if he didn't love her? I'll pretend to be a fool and believe him. He'll never change.

**ANTONY**

(overhearing the last sentence) Unless he is moved and inspired by Cleopatra. Now, since we love the feeling of being in love, let's not spoil the mood with serious discussion. We shouldn't spend a minute without some kind of amusement. What shall we do tonight?

**CLEOPATRA**

Hear the ambassadors.

**ANTONY**

Fie, wrangling

Queen!

50 Whom every thing becomes—to chide, to  
laugh,

To weep, whose 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*

**DEMETRIUS**

Is Caesar with Antonius prized so slight?

**PHILO**

Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony

He comes too short of that great property

60 Which still should go with Antony.

**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!

**CLEOPATRA**

Meet with the ambassadors.

**ANTONY**

Shame on you, stubborn Queen! Everything you do is attractive—scolding, laughing, crying—every emotion seems admirable when you express it. I won't see any messengers but yours. Tonight we'll wander through the streets and observe the people. Come, my Queen. That's what you wanted to do last night. (to the **MESSENGER**) Don't talk to us.

***ANTONY** and **CLEOPATRA** exit with their attendants.*

**DEMETRIUS**

Does Antony have so little respect for Caesar?

**PHILO**

Sir, sometimes he's like a different person, a person who can't measure up to the former Antony.

**DEMETRIUS**

I'm sad to say this confirms the stories being told about him in Rome, which I had taken to be lies. Well, I'll hope things change for the better soon. Have a good night!

*Exeunt*

Enter **ENOBARBUS**, **LAMPRIUS**, a  
**SOOTHSAYER**, *Rannius*, **LUCILLIUS**,  
**CHARMIAN**, **IRAS**, **MARDIAN** the eunuch, and  
**ALEXAS**

**CHARMIAN**

Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most anything  
Alexas, almost most absolute Alexas, where's  
the soothsayer that you praised so to th'  
Queen? Oh that I knew this husband, which,  
you say, must charge his horns with garlands!

**ALEXAS**

5 Soothsayer!

**SOOTHSAYER**

Your will?

**CHARMIAN**

(to **ALEXAS**) Is this the man? (to  
**SOOTHSAYER**) Is 't you, sir, that know things?

**SOOTHSAYER**

In nature's infinite book of secrecy  
A little I can read.

**ALEXAS**

10 (to **CHARMIAN**) Show him your hand.

**ENOBARBUS**

(to servants within) Bring in the banquet  
quickly. Wine enough  
Cleopatra's health to drink.

*They exit.*

## Act 1 Scene 2

**ENOBARBUS**, **LAMPRIUS**, the **FORTUNETELLER**, *Rannius*, **LUCILLUS**, **CHARMIAN**, **IRAS**, **MARDIAN** the eunuch, and  
**ALEXAS** enter.

**CHARMIAN**

Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most anything Alexas, almost the most consummate Alexas, where's the fortuneteller  
you recommended so highly to the Queen? Oh, I only wish I knew the name of that husband you said he  
predicted will have a cheating wife!

**ALEXAS**

(calling) Fortuneteller!

**FORTUNETELLER**

What can I do for you?

**CHARMIAN**

(to **ALEXAS**) Is this the man you recommended? (to the **FORTUNETELLER**) Are you the man who knows the  
future?

**FORTUNETELLER**

I can understand a few of nature's infinite secrets.

**ALEXAS**

(to **CHARMIAN**) Give him your hand to read.

**ENOBARBUS**

(to the servants) Bring the dessert in right away, and make sure there's enough wine to toast Cleopatra's health.

**CHARMIAN**

*(giving hand to SOOTHSAYER )* Good sir, give me good fortune.

**SOOTHSAYER**

I make not, but foresee.

**CHARMIAN**

15 Pray, then, foresee me one.

**SOOTHSAYER**

You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

**CHARMIAN**

*(to the others)* He means in flesh.

**IRAS**

No, you shall paint when you are old.

**CHARMIAN**

Wrinkles forbid!

**ALEXAS**

20 Vex not his prescience. Be attentive.

**CHARMIAN**

Hush!

**SOOTHSAYER**

You shall be more loving than beloved.

**CHARMIAN**

I had rather heat my liver with drinking.

**ALEXAS**

Nay, hear him.

**CHARMIAN**

*(giving her hand to the FORTUNETELLER )* Kind sir, give me a good fortune.

**FORTUNETELLER**

I don't make fortunes; I only see them.

**CHARMIAN**

Then see a good one for me.

**FORTUNETELLER**

Your beauty will be even greater than it is now.

**CHARMIAN**

*(to the others)* He means I'll get fat.

**IRAS**

No, he means you'll use makeup when you're old.

**CHARMIAN**

May my wrinkles forbid that!

**ALEXAS**

Don't joke about his predictions. Pay attention.

**CHARMIAN**

Quiet!

**FORTUNETELLER**

You will love more than you are loved.

**CHARMIAN**

I would rather get passion from drink than from love.

**ALEXAS**

Just listen to him.

**CHARMIAN**

25 Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to three kings in a forenoon and widow them all. Let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage. Find me to marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress.

**SOOTHSAYER**

30 You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

**CHARMIAN**

Oh, excellent! I love long life better than figs.

**SOOTHSAYER**

You have seen and proved a fairer former fortune  
Than that which is to approach.

**CHARMIAN**

Then belike my children shall have no names.  
Prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?

**SOOTHSAYER**

If every of your wishes had a womb,  
And fertile every wish, a million.

**CHARMIAN**

Out, fool! I forgive thee for a witch.

**ALEXAS**

You think none but your sheets are privy to your wishes.

**CHARMIAN**

**CHARMIAN**

Be kind now and tell me some excellent fortune. Tell me that I'll marry three kings before noon and be widowed by all of them. Tell me I'll have a child when I'm fifty who will be honored even by [Herod of Judea](#) . Let me marry Octavius Caesar and become my Queen's equal.

**FORTUNETELLER**

You will outlive the Queen.

**CHARMIAN**

Oh, excellent! I love long life better than [figs](#) .

**FORTUNETELLER**

You have already had better fortune than the future will bring.

**CHARMIAN**

Then my children will probably be illegitimate. Tell me, please: how many boys and girls will I have?

**FORTUNETELLER**

If every time you wished for a child you could have had one, you would have a million children.

**CHARMIAN**

Get out of here, you fool! Since you're a fortuneteller I won't bring charges of witchcraft against you.

**ALEXAS**

You seem to think no one outside of your bedroom knows what you wish.

**CHARMIAN**

40 (*to* **SOOTHSAYER** ) Nay, come, tell Iras hers.

**ALEXAS**

We'll know all our fortunes.

**ENOBARBUS**

Mine, and most of our fortunes tonight, shall be—drunk to bed.

**IRAS**

(*giving her hand to the* **SOOTHSAYER** ) There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else.

**CHARMIAN**

E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine.

**IRAS**

Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.

**CHARMIAN**

Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful prognostication, I cannot scratch mine ear.—Prithee, tell her but a workaday fortune.

**SOOTHSAYER**

Your fortunes are alike.

**IRAS**

But how, but how? Give me particulars.

**SOOTHSAYER**

I have said.

**IRAS**

Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?

(*to* **FORTUNETELLER** ) Never mind. Tell Iras's fortune.

**ALEXAS**

We'll all want our fortune told.

**ENOBARBUS**

My fortune—like that of many of us tonight—is to go drunk to bed.

**IRAS**

(*giving her hand to the* **FORTUNETELLER** ) There's a palm that will predict a chaste life, if nothing else.

**CHARMIAN**

Like the [overflowing Nile](#) predicts famine.

**IRAS**

Oh stop it, you lusty bed-hopper. You can't see the future.

**CHARMIAN**

Well, if a moist palm isn't a clear sign of promiscuity, then I can't scratch my own ear. (*to* **FORTUNETELLER** ) Please, tell her an ordinary fortune.

**FORTUNETELLER**

Your fortunes are the same.

**IRAS**

But how? How is that possible? Give me details.

**FORTUNETELLER**

I've said what I have to say.

**IRAS**

Isn't my fortune just a little better than hers? By an inch, even?



**CHARMIAN**

55 Well, if you were but an inch of fortune better than I, where would you choose it?

**IRAS**

Not in my husband's nose.

**CHARMIAN**

Our worser thoughts heavens mend. Alexas! *(to SOOTHSAYER )* Come, his fortune, his fortune! Oh, let him marry a woman that cannot go, sweet Isis, I beseech thee, and let her die too, and give him a worse, and let worse follow worse, till the worst of all follow him laughing to his grave, fifty-fold a cuckold! Good Isis, hear me this prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight, good Isis, I beseech thee!

**IRAS**

65 Amen, dear goddess, hear that prayer of the people! For, as it is a heartbreaking to see a handsome man loose-wived, so it is a deadly sorrow to behold a foul knave uncuckolded. Therefore, dear Isis, keep decorum, and fortune him accordingly.

**CHARMIAN**

70 Amen.

**ALEXAS**

*(to himself)* Lo now, if it lay in their hands to make me a cuckold, they would make themselves whores but they'd do 't.

**CHARMIAN**

Well, if you could have just an inch of better fortune than me, where would you like the improvement?

**IRAS**

Not in my husband's nose.

**CHARMIAN**

May heaven save us from indecent thoughts! Alexas! *(to the FORTUNETELLER )* Come and tell his fortune. Let him marry a woman he can't satisfy, dear Isis , I pray! And then let her die, and give him someone worse. Then let *her* die, and let her replacement be even worse. And so on until the last one, who is unfaithful with at least fifty other men and laughs at him until he dies. I beg you to grant my prayer, good Isis, even though it means you deny me something more important for myself. Good Isis, I beg you!

**IRAS**

Amen, dear goddess. Listen to our prayer. If it's sad to see a handsome man with a cheating wife, it's a tragedy to see an ugly thug with a wife who's faithful. Therefore, dear Isis, do the right thing and give him the fortune he deserves.

**CHARMIAN**

Amen.

**ALEXAS**

*(to himself)* See! If they could make me a cuckold, they'd whore themselves in order to see it done.

**ENOBARBUS**

Hush! Here comes Antony.

**CHARMIAN**

Not he. The Queen.

*Enter CLEOPATRA*

**CLEOPATRA**

<sup>75</sup> Saw you my lord?

**ENOBARBUS**

No, lady.

**CLEOPATRA**

Was he not here?

**CHARMIAN**

No, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

He was disposed to mirth, but on the sudden  
<sup>80</sup> A Roman thought hath struck him.—  
Enobarbus!

**ENOBARBUS**

Madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

Seek him and bring him hither.—  
Where's Alexas?

**ALEXAS**

Here at your service. My lord approaches.

*Enter ANTONY with the FIRST MESSENGER*

**ENOBARBUS**

Quiet! Here comes Antony.

**CHARMIAN**

It's not him; it's the Queen.

*CLEOPATRA enters.*

**CLEOPATRA**

Have you seen my lord?

**ENOBARBUS**

No, lady.

**CLEOPATRA**

Wasn't he here?

**CHARMIAN**

No, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

He was in a good mood, and then suddenly he started thinking of Rome. Enobarbus?

**ENOBARBUS**

Madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

Find him and bring him here. Where's Alexas?

**ALEXAS**

Here, at your service. Here comes my lord.

*ANTONY and the FIRST MESSENGER enter.*

**CLEOPATRA**

85 We will not look upon him. Go with us.

*Exeunt all but **ANTONY** and the **FIRST MESSENGER***

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

**ANTONY**

Against my brother Lucius?

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Ay.

But soon that war had end, and the time's state

90 Made friends of them, joining their force  
'gainst Caesar,  
Whose better issue in the war from Italy  
Upon the first encounter drove them.

**ANTONY**

Well, what worst?

**FIRST MESSENGER**

The nature of bad news infects the teller.

**ANTONY**

95 When it concerns the fool or coward. On.  
Things that are past are done, with me. 'Tis thus:  
Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death,  
I hear him as he flattered.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Labienus—

**CLEOPATRA**

I [won't see him](#). Everyone come with me.

*Everyone follows **CLEOPATRA** out, leaving **ANTONY** and the **FIRST MESSENGER**.*

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Your wife, Fulvia, mustered her army first.

**ANTONY**

Against my brother Lucius?

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Yes. But that war ended as soon as circumstances made it advisable for them to join together against Caesar.  
But in their very first battle, Caesar won and drove them out of Italy.

**ANTONY**

Well, give me the worst news.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

The bearer of bad news is often blamed for it.

**ANTONY**

Only if the hearer is a fool or a coward. Go on. As far as I'm concerned, what's past is done. It's like this: as long as a person tells me the truth, even though it means my death, I will listen as though he praised me.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

This is stiff news—hath with his Parthian force  
100 Extended Asia: from Euphrates  
His conquering banner shook, from Syria  
To Lydia and to Ionia,  
Whilst—

**ANTONY**

"Antony," thou wouldst say.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

O my lord!

**ANTONY**

105 Speak to me home. Mince not the general  
tongue.  
Name Cleopatra as she is called in Rome.  
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my  
faults  
With such full license as both truth and  
malice  
Have power to utter. Oh, then we bring forth  
weeds  
110 When our quick minds lie still, and our ills told  
us  
Is as our earing.

*Enter **SECOND MESSENGER***

Fare thee well awhile.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

At your noble pleasure.

*Exit **FIRST MESSENGER***

**ANTONY**

The news is disturbing. [Labienus](#) , with the army he led in Parthia, has conquered all of Asia, all the way to the Euphrates River, including Syria, Lydia, and Ionia, while—

**ANTONY**

"While Antony . . ." is what you want to say.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Oh, my lord!

**ANTONY**

Speak plainly. Don't tone down what the people are saying. Call Cleopatra what the Romans call her. Use Fulvia's abusive language. Freely scold me for my faults with as much severity as an enemy with truth on his side. It's easy to err when left to our own devices, but criticism helps us to see our faults and correct them.

*A **SECOND MESSENGER** enters.*

Good-bye for a while.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

I'll be at your service.

*The **FIRST MESSENGER** exits.*

**ANTONY**

From Sicyon, how, the news? Speak there.

**SECOND MESSENGER**

The man from Sicyon—

**ANTONY**

Is there such an  
one?

**SECOND MESSENGER**

115 He stays upon your will.

**ANTONY**

Let him appear.

*Exit **SECOND MESSENGER***

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,  
Or lose myself in dotage.

*Enter **THIRD MESSENGER**, with a letter*

What are you?

**THIRD MESSENGER**

Fulvia thy wife is dead.

**ANTONY**

Where died she?

**THIRD MESSENGER**

In Sicyon.

120 Her length of sickness, with what else more  
serious

Importeth thee to know, this bears.

*He gives **ANTONY** a letter*

What's the news from [Sicyon](#) . Tell me.

**SECOND MESSENGER**

The man from Sicyon—

**ANTONY**

Is he here?

**SECOND MESSENGER**

He's waiting outside.

**ANTONY**

Have him come in.

*The **SECOND MESSENGER** exits.*

*(to himself)* I must break Cleopatra's powerful hold over me or else I'll lose myself in foolish infatuation.

*A **THIRD MESSENGER** enters with a letter.*

What's your message?

**THIRD MESSENGER**

Your wife, Fulvia, is dead.

**ANTONY**

Where did she die?

**THIRD MESSENGER**

In Sicyon. In this letter you'll find details of her illness and other, more serious matters that concern you.

*He hands the letter to **ANTONY**.*

**ANTONY**

Forbear

me.

*Exit* **THIRD MESSENGER**

*(to himself)* There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it.

What our contempts doth often hurl from us  
We wish it ours again. The present pleasure,

125 By revolution lowering, does become

The opposite of itself. She's good, being gone.  
The hand could pluck her back that shoved  
her on.

I must from this enchanting Queen break off.

Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know

130 My idleness doth hatch.—How now,  
Enobarbus!

*Enter* **ENOBARBUS**

**ENOBARBUS**

What's your pleasure, sir?

**ANTONY**

I must with haste from hence.

**ENOBARBUS**

Why, then, we kill all our women. We see how mortal an unkindness is to them. If they suffer our departure, death's the word.

**ANTONY**

I must be gone.

**ANTONY**

Leave me.

*The* **THIRD MESSENGER** *exits.*

*(to himself)* A great spirit has gone from the world! This is what I wanted. Once it's gone, the very thing we reject becomes what we desire. What's enjoyable one day becomes the opposite as time rolls around. Now that she's gone, I want her. Now I would call her back, though I pushed her away. I have to break from this beguiling Queen. The time I've wasted here has caused ten thousand more problems than the ones I know about. *(calling)* Are you there, Enobarbus?

**ENOBARBUS** *enters.*

**ENOBARBUS**

What would you like, sir?

**ANTONY**

I have to leave right away.

**ENOBARBUS**

That will kill our lovers. We know how much they suffer if we are unkind to them. If we leave, it will feel like nothing less than death to them.

**ANTONY**

I must be gone.

**ENOBARBUS**

Under a compelling occasion, let women die.  
It were pity to cast them away for nothing,  
though between them and a great cause they  
should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra,  
catching but the least noise of this, dies  
instantly. I have seen her die twenty times  
upon far poorer moment. I do think there is  
mettle in death, which commits some loving  
act upon her, she hath such a celerity in  
dying.

**ANTONY**

She is cunning past man's thought.

**ENOBARBUS**

<sup>145</sup> Alack, sir, no, her passions are made of  
nothing but the finest part of pure love. We  
cannot call her winds and waters sighs and  
tears. They are greater storms and tempests  
than almanacs can report. This cannot be  
cunning in her. If it be, she makes a shower of  
rain as well as Jove.

**ANTONY**

Would I had never seen her!

**ENOBARBUS**

O sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful  
piece of work which not to have been blessed  
withal would have discredited your travel.

**ANTONY**

<sup>155</sup> Fulvia is dead.

**ENOBARBUS**

If it's that important, then let the women die. It would be a pity to throw them away for nothing, but if it's a matter  
of choosing between them and a great cause, then they're worthless. If Cleopatra hears even a breath of this,  
she'll die immediately. I've seen her claim to be dying twenty times before, and for far less reason. I think there  
must be something invigorating about death, since she dies with such enthusiasm.

**ANTONY**

She's more cunning than anyone can imagine.

**ENOBARBUS**

Alas, sir, no, her feelings come from pure love, not cleverness. Her sighs and tears are like great winds and  
floods. She has more storms and tempests in her than a weather almanac. Her temper is not a trick or a skill—if it  
is, she can make it rain as well as [Jove](#) .

**ANTONY**

I wish I'd never seen her!

**ENOBARBUS**

Then you'd have missed an amazing piece of work, sir, and your trip would have been poorer for the loss.

**ANTONY**

Fulvia is dead.

**ENOBARBUS**

Sir?

**ANTONY**

Fulvia is dead.

**ENOBARBUS**

Fulvia?

**ANTONY**

Dead.

**ENOBARBUS**

160 Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice.

When it pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it shows to man the tailors of the earth, comforting therein, that when old robes are worn out, there are members to make new. If there were no more women but Fulvia, then had you indeed a cut, and the case to be lamented. This grief is crowned with consolation. Your old smock brings forth a new petticoat, and indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

**ANTONY**

The business she hath broached in the state

170 Cannot endure my absence.

**ENOBARBUS**

And the business you have broached here cannot be without you, especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends on your abode.

**ANTONY**

**ENOBARBUS**

Pardon me?

**ANTONY**

Fulvia is dead.

**ENOBARBUS**

Fulvia?

**ANTONY**

Dead.

**ENOBARBUS**

Then you should offer the gods a sacrifice to show your thanks. When a man's wife dies, he can be comforted by the knowledge that there are replacements to be found. If Fulvia were the last woman on earth, there would be a reason to grieve. But in this way, grief and comfort appear together. The only kind of tears you should shed in this case are the kind you might get from holding an onion to your nose.

**ANTONY**

I must go and continue the business Fulvia started.

**ENOBARBUS**

The business you began here needs you as well—especially the business with Cleopatra, which only you can attend to.

**ANTONY**



No more light answers. Let our officers  
175 Have notice what we purpose. I shall break  
The cause of our expedience to the Queen  
And get her leave to part. For not alone  
The death of Fulvia, with more urgent  
touches,  
Do strongly speak to us, but the letters too  
180 Of many our contriving friends in Rome  
Petition us at home. Sextus Pompeius  
Hath given the dare to Caesar and commands  
The empire of the sea. Our slippery people,  
Whose love is never linked to the deserver  
185 Till his deserts are past, begin to throw  
Pompey the Great and all his dignities  
Upon his son, who—high in name and power,  
Higher than both in blood and life—stands up  
For the main soldier, whose quality, going on,  
190 The sides o' th' world may danger. Much is  
breeding  
Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life,  
And not a serpent's poison. Say our pleasure,  
To such whose place is under us, requires  
Our quick remove from hence.

**ENOBARBUS**

195 I shall do 't.

*Exeunt*

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, ALEXAS, and  
IRAS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Enough of this frivolous talk. Give our officers notice of our intentions. I'll tell the Queen the reason for our quick departure and get her permission to leave. Fulvia's death and the pressing concerns related to it are not the only reasons I am eager to go; friends in Rome have also sent many letters advising my return. Sextus Pompeius has challenged Caesar. His fleet controls the sea. Our fickle citizens—who never reward service until that service is over—are now giving all the rights and honors won by Pompey the Great to his son, Sextus. Sextus has great honor and power, and his spirit and energy are even greater, all of which makes him the most formidable soldier in the empire. The empire may be in danger if he's not restrained before he reaches his full potential. There are many troubles brewing now that have yet to become full-fledged threats.

[Like horse's hairs dropped in a bucket of water, they come alive like snakes but as yet they bear no poison.](#) Relay our intentions to the officers who will be in charge of the move.

**ENOBARBUS**

I will.

*They both exit.*

## Act 1 Scene 3

*CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, ALEXAS, and IRAS enter.*

**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

5 That I am sudden sick. Quick, and return.

*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**

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

**CHARMIAN**

Tempt him not so too far. I wish, forbear.

In time we hate that which we often fear.

*Enter ANTONY*

Where is he?

**CHARMIAN**

I haven't seen him recently.

**CLEOPATRA**

(to **ALEXAS** ) Find out where he is, who's with him, and what he's doing. Don't tell him I sent you. If he's sad, tell  
him I'm dancing. If he's happy, say that I've suddenly taken sick. Hurry, and come back.

*ALEXAS exits.*

**CHARMIAN**

Madam, I think if you love him so much, you aren't using the best way to get him to reciprocate.

**CLEOPATRA**

What should I do that I'm not doing?

**CHARMIAN**

Always give him his way. Never contradict him.

**CLEOPATRA**

You advise me like a fool. That's the way to lose him.

**CHARMIAN**

Don't push him too far. I wish you'd be patient. We come to hate that which controls us.

*ANTONY enters.*

But here comes Antony.

**CLEOPATRA**

I am sick and sullen.

**ANTONY**

I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose—

**CLEOPATRA**

15 Help me away, dear Charmian! I shall fall.

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.

20 What, says the married woman you may go?

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—

But here comes Antony.

**CLEOPATRA**

I am sick and sullen.

**ANTONY**

I'm sorry to have to say this—

**CLEOPATRA**

Help me away from here, dear Charmian! I shall faint. I won't be able to go on this way much longer. Human  
nature isn't built to withstand this.

**ANTONY**

Now, my dearest Queen—

**CLEOPATRA**

Please, stand farther away from me.

**ANTONY**

What's the matter?

**CLEOPATRA**

I can see in your eyes there's been some good news. What, does your wife say you can come home? I wish she'd  
never let you come. Don't let her say I kept you. I have no power over you. You belong to her.

**ANTONY**

The gods know—

**CLEOPATRA**

Oh never was there  
queen

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

**ANTONY**

Cleopatra—

**CLEOPATRA**

Why should I think you can be mine, and true  
—

Though you in swearing shake the thronèd  
gods—

Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous  
madness,

30 To be entangled with those mouth-made  
vows  
Which break themselves in swearing!

**ANTONY**

Most

sweet Queen—

**CLEOPATRA**

Nay, pray you, seek no color for your going,  
But bid farewell and go. When you sued  
staying,

Then was the time for words. No going then!

35 Eternity was in our lips and eyes,  
Bliss in our brows' bent, none our parts so  
poor  
But was a race of heaven. They are so still,  
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,

**CLEOPATRA**

Oh, never has a queen been so betrayed as I have been. I knew from the first it would be this way.

**ANTONY**

Cleopatra—

**CLEOPATRA**

How could I have ever thought that you would be faithful and true, even though your vows of love shook the  
heavens themselves—you, who were unfaithful to Fulvia? It was wild insanity to believe promises made by the  
mouth and not the heart. Such false vows are broken as soon as they are spoken.

**ANTONY**

Most sweet Queen—

**CLEOPATRA**

No, please don't try to excuse your departure. Just say good-bye and go. When you begged to stay, that was the  
time for words. You didn't want to go then! You saw eternity in my lips and eyes, and happiness in the arch of my  
eyebrows. Then, all my parts seemed angelic to you. My features are still that beautiful—or else you, the greatest  
soldier in the world, have become the greatest liar by overpraising them.

Art turned the greatest liar.

**ANTONY**

How now, lady?

**CLEOPATRA**

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

**ANTONY**

Hear me,

Queen:

The strong necessity of time commands  
Our services awhile, but my full heart  
Remains in use with you. Our Italy

45 Shines o'er with civil swords. Sextus Pompeius  
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,

50 Rich in his father's honor, creeps apace  
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,  
55 And that which most with you should safe my  
going,  
Is Fulvia's death.

**CLEOPATRA**

**ANTONY**

What do you mean, lady?

**CLEOPATRA**

I wish I were as big and strong as you. Then you'd see the courage that lives in the Queen of Egypt.

**ANTONY**

Listen to me, Queen. There is an emergency I must take care of, but my whole heart will remain here with you. My Italy is full of civil war. Sextus Pompeius is sailing toward the port of Rome. When two domestic opponents are equally matched—as we are against Pompey—factions will form on the smallest of pretexts. When a formerly hated man grows powerful, he suddenly finds himself with many supporters. Pompey, who was once condemned, now wields his father's power, and all the citizens who have grievances against the government are joining him. Pompey's numbers are steadily growing, and the government is ready to do something desperate. But my personal motivation—and that which should move you most to sanction my departure—is that Fulvia is dead.

**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*

60 Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read  
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,

65 In Fulvia's death how mine received shall be.

**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  
70 Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war  
As thou affects.

**CLEOPATRA**

Cut my lace, Charmian, come!  
But let it be. I am quickly ill, and well,  
So Antony loves.

**ANTONY**

75 My precious Queen, forbear,

I may not have outlived the foolishness of my youth, but I'm not that childishly naïve. Is it possible Fulvia is dead?

**ANTONY**

She's dead, my Queen.

*He shows her the message.*

Look at this. Take your royal time and read about the quarrels she encouraged. And saving the best for last, read  
when and where she died.

**CLEOPATRA**

Oh, unfaithful lover! [You should be filling vials with your tears.](#) Seeing how you take Fulvia's death, I can see how  
you would react to mine.

**ANTONY**

Stop arguing and listen to my plans. Whether I go ahead with them or not is completely up to you. I swear by the  
sun that when I leave here, it will be as your faithful servant. I will make either peace or war, whichever you  
prefer.

**CLEOPATRA**

Cut my corset laces, Charmian, so I can breathe. Hurry! No, leave it alone. I waver easily between sickness and  
health. Just as Antony loves.

**ANTONY**

Control yourself, my precious Queen, and concede that my love is true. It has endured many genuine trials.

And give true evidence to his love which  
stands  
An honorable trial.

**CLEOPATRA**

So Fulvia told me.

I prithee, turn aside and weep for her.

80 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 honor.

**ANTONY**

You'll heat my blood. No

more.

**CLEOPATRA**

You can do better yet, but this is meetly.

**ANTONY**

85 Now, by my sword—

**CLEOPATRA**

And target. Still he

mends.

(to **CHARMIAN** ) But this is not the best. Look,

prithee, Charmian,

How this Herculean Roman does become

The carriage of his chafe.

**ANTONY**

I'll leave you, lady.

**CLEOPATRA**

90 Courteous lord, one word.

**CLEOPATRA**

That's what Fulvia told me. I beg you, turn away and cry for her. Then say good-bye to me and tell me those tears were for my benefit. Good. Now perform a scene for me, using your excellent skills of playacting, and pretend that you're being honorable and righteous.

**ANTONY**

You'll make me angry. No more of this.

**CLEOPATRA**

I know you can do better than that, but it'll do for now.

**ANTONY**

I swear by my sword—

**CLEOPATRA**

Swear by your shield, too! (to **CHARMIAN** ) He's getting better, but still it's not his best. See, Charmian, how well this mighty Roman portrays anger?

**ANTONY**

I'll leave you, lady.

**CLEOPATRA**

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—  
Oh, my oblivion is a very Antony,  
95 And I am all forgotten.

**ANTONY**

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

**CLEOPATRA**

'Tis sweating labor  
To bear such idleness so near the heart  
As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me,  
100 Since my becoming kill me when they do  
not  
Eye well to you. Your honor calls you hence.  
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly,  
And all the gods go with you! Upon your  
sword  
Sit laurel victory, and smooth success  
105 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.  
Away!

*Exeunt*

Polite sir, let me say one thing. Sir, you and I must part company—no, that's not it. Sir, you and I were lovers—no, that's not it, either. You already know all that. There's something I'd like to—oh, I've forgotten what I wanted to say. Just as Antony has forgotten me.

**ANTONY**

If you weren't the queen of immaturity, I'd think you were immaturity itself.

**CLEOPATRA**

It's difficult to have such immaturity so close to my heart, but bear with me. Even the traits that become me most kill me when you don't approve of them. Your honor is the reason you are leaving. So I beg you not to listen to my foolishness. May the gods be with you. May your sword be victorious and everything you do succeed.

**ANTONY**

Let's go. Come with me. Our imminent separation so occupies our thoughts that even though you stay here, you come with me, and even though I leave here, I stay with you.

*They exit.*

## Act 1 Scene 4



Enter **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**, reading a letter,  
**LEPIDUS**, and their train

**CAESAR**

You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,  
It is not Caesar's natural vice to hate  
Our great competitor. From Alexandria  
This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes  
5 The lamps of night in revel; is not more  
manlike  
Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy  
More womanly than he; hardly gave audience,  
or  
Vouchsafed to think he had partners. You  
shall find there  
A man who is th' abstract of all faults  
10 That all men follow.

**LEPIDUS**

I must not think there  
are  
Evils enough to darken all his goodness.  
His faults in him seem as the spots of heaven,  
More fiery by night's blackness, hereditary  
Rather than purchased, what he cannot  
change  
15 Than what he chooses.

**CAESAR**

You are too indulgent. Let's grant, it is not  
Amiss to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy,  
To give a kingdom for a mirth, to sit  
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave,

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR** enters, reading a letter, with **LEPIDUS** and their courtiers and attendants.

**CAESAR**

Now you'll see, Lepidus, that I don't disdain our noble ally because of a personal whim. Here's the news from  
Alexandra: Antony fishes, drinks, and celebrates all night. He's become as frivolous and self-indulgent as  
[Ptolemy](#)'s queen, Cleopatra. He rarely attends to his duties or acknowledges he has partners to be considered.  
Here's a man who is the epitome of all the vices known to man.

**LEPIDUS**

I can't believe there could be enough vice in the world to outshine all the good in him. His faults stand out  
because they must be compared to all his virtues, like stars that shine brightly against the dark night sky. They're  
more likely to be the result of inherited weakness than independent choice.

**CAESAR**

You're too forgiving. Let's say, for argument's sake, that it's not improper to fool around with Ptolemy's wife, or to  
trade a kingdom for a joke. That it's fine to engage in drinking matches with inferiors, or stumble drunkenly  
through the streets in the middle of the day, or get into fist fights with sweaty servants. Even if we said that this  
behavior suits him—though only a man with a perfect character could avoid being disgraced by such antics—  
there's no excuse for the extra work we've had to take on while he's been off amusing himself. If he's been

20 To reel the streets at noon, and stand the  
buffet  
With knaves that smell of sweat. Say this  
becomes him—  
As his composure must be rare indeed  
Whom these things cannot blemish—yet  
must Antony  
No way excuse his foils when we do bear  
25 So great weight in his lightness. If he filled  
His vacancy with his voluptuousness,  
Full surfeits and the dryness of his bones  
Call on him for 't. But to confound such time  
That drums him from his sport and speaks as  
loud  
30 As his own state and ours, 'tis to be chid  
As we rate boys who, being mature in  
knowledge,  
Pawn their experience to their present  
pleasure  
And so rebel to judgment.

*Enter **FIRST MESSENGER***

**LEPIDUS**

Here's more  
news.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

Thy biddings have been done, and every  
hour,  
35 Most noble Caesar, shalt thou have report  
How 'tis abroad. Pompey is strong at sea,  
And it appears he is beloved of those  
That only have feared Caesar. To the ports

spending his leisure time in lustful pursuits, then he'll be punished with venereal diseases, and that's his  
business. But he's wasting time and resources vital to our cause and endangering both his position and ours. He  
should be chastised, like any boy who knows what's right but chooses to satisfy his desires regardless.

*The **FIRST MESSENGER** enters.*

**LEPIDUS**

Here's more news.

**FIRST MESSENGER**

We've followed your commands, lord Caesar. You shall have hourly updates regarding the situation at sea.  
Pompey has a strong navy. All the people who only stayed with you out of fear are gathering at the port to join  
him, in the opinion he's been treated unfairly.

The discontents repair, and men's reports  
40 Give him much wronged.

**CAESAR**

I should have  
known no less.  
It hath been taught us from the primal state  
That he which is was wished until he were,  
And the ebb'd man, ne'er loved till ne'er  
worth love,  
Comes deared by being lacked. This common  
body,  
45 Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,  
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide  
To rot itself with motion.

*Enter **SECOND MESSENGER***

**SECOND MESSENGER**

Caesar, I bring thee word  
Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,  
50 Make the sea serve them, which they ear and  
wound  
With keels of every kind. Many hot inroads  
They make in Italy—the borders maritime  
Lack blood to think on 't—and flush youth  
revolt.  
No vessel can peep forth, but 'tis as soon  
55 Taken as seen, for Pompey's name strikes  
more  
Than could his war resisted.

*Exit*

**CAESAR**

I should have known it. It's been this way ever since the first government was organized. People will transfer their support to a strong figure until he becomes their actual leader. Then they will value their former leader, even though the loss of their support has made him powerless. The common crowd changes like the tide, to and fro, serving whoever is on the rise. Their power is worn away by their fickleness.

*The **SECOND MESSENGER** enters.*

**SECOND MESSENGER**

Caesar, I have news about Menecrates and Menas, notorious pirates who prowl the sea in a variety of ships. They've made many raids upon Italy—and the naval patrols go pale at even the thought of resisting them. The young, energetic men are joining Pompey. These pirates can capture a ship as soon as it leaves the harbor, since the simple mention of the name "Pompey" carries as much power as a fleet of troops in battle.

***SECOND MESSENGER** exits.*

**CAESAR**

Antony,

Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou  
once

Wast beaten from Modena, where thou  
slew'st

Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel

60 Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st  
against,

Though daintily brought up, with patience  
more

Than savages could suffer. Thou didst drink

The stale of horses and the gilded puddle

Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate  
then did deign

65 The roughest berry on the rudest hedge.

Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture  
sheets,

The barks of trees thou browsed. On the Alps

It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,

Which some did die to look on. And all this—

70 It wounds thine honor that I speak it now—

Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek

So much as lanked not.

**LEPIDUS**

'Tis pity of him.

**CAESAR**

Let his shames quickly

75 Drive him to Rome. 'Tis time we twain

Did show ourselves i' th' field, and to that end

Assemble we immediate council. Pompey

Thrives in our idleness.

**CAESAR**

Antony, it's time to stop your wild hedonism. When you were defeated at the battle of Modena—where you killed the consuls, Hirtius and Pansa—and then driven away, you had to face hunger and thirst. And even though you were brought up as a gentleman, you patiently tolerated more hardships than savages could withstand. You drank horses' urine and water from scum-covered puddles that even animals would refuse. Though you were used to the finest foods, you didn't turn up your nose at the bitterest berries on the thorniest bushes. You even ate bark from trees, as deer do in winter. Going over the Alps, you ate strange meat that some men would rather die than consume. And you went through all this—the comparison between then and now shames you—in such a soldier-like way that you didn't seem to suffer at all.

**LEPIDUS**

It's too bad.

**CAESAR**

Let's hope his sense of shame will send him back to Rome quickly. It's time that we brought our armies into the field. Let's call a council of war immediately. Pompey is making the most of our absence.

**LEPIDUS**

Tomorrow, Caesar,

I shall be furnished to inform you rightly

80 Both what by sea and land I can be able

To front this present time.

**CAESAR**

Till which

encounter

It is my business too. Farewell.

**LEPIDUS**

Farewell, my lord. What you shall know

meantime

Of stirs abroad, I shall beseech you, sir,

85 To let me be partaker.

**CAESAR**

Doubt not, sir. I knew it for my bond.

*Exeunt*

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and  
MARDIAN*

**CLEOPATRA**

Charmian!

**CHARMIAN**

Madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

Ha, ha! Give me to drink mandragora.

**LEPIDUS**

Tomorrow, Caesar, I'll be able to tell you what land and sea forces I can raise for this war.

**CAESAR**

I'll be getting my own figures together in the meantime. Good-bye.

**LEPIDUS**

Good-bye, my lord. If you receive any more news, please share it with me.

**CAESAR**

Don't worry, that goes without saying.

*They exit.*

## Act 1 Scene 5

*CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN enter.*

**CLEOPATRA**

Charmian!

**CHARMIAN**

Madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

Ah, give me some [mandragora](#) to drink.

**CHARMIAN**

Why, madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

5 That I might sleep out this great gap of time  
My Antony is away.

**CHARMIAN**

You think of him too much.

**CLEOPATRA**

Oh, 'tis treason!

**CHARMIAN**

Madam, I trust, not so.

**CLEOPATRA**

Thou, eunuch Mardian!

**MARDIAN**

What's your  
highness' pleasure?

**CLEOPATRA**

10 Not now to hear thee sing. I take no pleasure  
In aught an eunuch has. 'Tis well for thee  
That, being unseminared, thy freer thoughts  
May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou  
affections?

**MARDIAN**

Yes, gracious madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

15 Indeed?

**MARDIAN**

**CHARMIAN**

Why, madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

So I can sleep away the time while my Antony is gone.

**CHARMIAN**

You think about him too much.

**CLEOPATRA**

That's treason!

**CHARMIAN**

I hope not, Madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

Eunuch! Mardian!

**MARDIAN**

What can I do for your highness?

**CLEOPATRA**

I don't want to hear you sing. I'm not interested in anything a eunuch can do. It's a good thing for you that, being castrated, you can better concentrate on my needs. Do you have desires?

**MARDIAN**

Yes, dear madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

Indeed?

**MARDIAN**

Not in deed, madam, for I can do nothing  
But what indeed is honest to be done.  
Yet have I fierce affections, and think  
What Venus did with Mars.

**CLEOPATRA**

O Charmian,  
20 Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he or  
sits he?  
Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse?  
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!  
Do bravely, horse, for wott'st thou whom thou  
mov'st?  
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm  
25 And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,  
Or murmuring "Where's my serpent of old  
Nile?"  
For so he calls me. Now I feed myself  
With most delicious poison. Think on me,  
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches  
black  
30 And wrinkled deep in time. Broad-fronted  
Caesar,  
When thou wast here above the ground, I was  
A morsel for a monarch. And great Pompey  
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my  
brow.  
There would he anchor his aspect, and die  
35 With looking on his life.

*Enter ALEXAS*

**ALEXAS**

Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

Well, not in deed, madam, since I can't do anything unchaste. But I do have intense passions—and I do think  
about [what Venus did with Mars](#) .

**CLEOPATRA**

Oh, Charmian, where do you think he is now? Is he standing or sitting? Or is he walking? Or is he on his horse?  
Oh, how fortunate that horse is to have Antony on him. Do well, horse. Do you know whom it is you carry? A man  
who carries responsibility for a third of the world on his shoulders. He's speaking now, or perhaps he's  
whispering, "Where's my serpent of the Nile?" For that's his pet name for me. I'm killing myself with this  
provocative speculation . . . Are you thinking about me? Even though I've been darkened by the sun and wrinkled  
with age? Caesar, with your broad forehead, when you were alive,  
[I was the perfect young consort for a king. And powerful Pompey used to stare at me as if he were frozen in time.](#)

*ALEXAS enters.*

**ALEXAS**

Queen of Egypt, greetings!

**CLEOPATRA**

How much unlike art thou Mark Antony!  
Yet, coming from him, that great med'cine  
hath

With his tinct gilded thee.

40 How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

**ALEXAS**

Last thing he did, dear Queen,  
He kissed—the last of many doubled kisses—  
This orient pearl.

*He gives a pearl.*

His speech sticks in my  
heart.

**CLEOPATRA**

Mine ear must pluck it thence.

**ALEXAS**

"Good  
friend," quoth he,

45 "Say the firm Roman to great Egypt sends  
This treasure of an oyster, at whose foot,  
To mend the petty present, I will piece  
Her opulent throne with kingdoms. All the  
East,  
Say thou, shall call her mistress." So he  
nodded,  
50 And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,  
Who neighed so high that what I would have  
spoke  
Was beastly dumbled by him.

**CLEOPATRA**

You are nothing like Mark Antony! But since you come from him, you're saturated with his healing spirit. How  
does it go with my magnificent Mark Antony?

**ALEXAS**

The last thing he did before sending me off, dear Queen, was to kiss—the last of many such kisses—this Indian  
pearl for you.

*He gives **CLEOPATRA** a pearl.*

His speech is stored in my heart.

**CLEOPATRA**

My ear must pull it out.

**ALEXAS**

"Good friend," he said, "say that the faithful Roman sends an oyster's treasure to the great Queen of Egypt, and  
that he plans to enhance this meager gift by adding new kingdoms to her empire. Tell her that the entire East  
shall call her Queen." Then he nodded and solemnly mounted an armored warhorse, which neighed so loudly it  
effectively silenced anything I might have said in reply.



**CLEOPATRA**

What was he, sad or merry?

**ALEXAS**

Like to the time o' th' year between the  
extremes

55 Of hot and cold, he was nor sad nor merry.

**CLEOPATRA**

O well-divided disposition! Note him,  
Note him, good Charmian, 'tis the man, but  
note him.

He was not sad, for he would shine on those  
That make their looks by his. He was not  
merry,

60 Which seemed to tell them his remembrance  
lay

In Egypt with his joy, but between both.

O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,  
The violence of either thee becomes,  
So does it no man else.—Mett'st thou my  
posts?

**ALEXAS**

65 Ay, madam, twenty several messengers.  
Why do you send so thick?

**CLEOPATRA**

Who's born that

day

When I forget to send to Antony

Shall die a beggar. Ink and paper, Charmian.

Welcome, my good Alexas. Did I, Charmian,

70 Ever love Caesar so?

**CLEOPATRA**

Was he sad or happy?

**ALEXAS**

He was like that time of year halfway between the extremes of hot and cold: he was neither sad nor happy.

**CLEOPATRA**

Oh, what an even disposition he has! Observe, observe good Charmian! That's exactly how he is! Just notice. He wasn't sad, because he knows that his disposition affects others. He wasn't merry, because to be merry would indicate that he had forgotten his love in Egypt. He was somewhere in the middle, between them . . . Oh, heavenly mixture! Whether you are sad or merry, the intensity of either suits you like no one else . . . Did you meet my messengers on your way here?

**ALEXAS**

Yes, madam, twenty different messengers. Why did you send so many?

**CLEOPATRA**

Whoever is born on a day I forget to send a message to Antony will die a beggar. Bring ink and paper, Charmian.  
Welcome, my good Alexas. Charmian, did I ever love Caesar as much as this?

**CHARMIAN**

Oh, that brave Caesar!

**CLEOPATRA**

Be choked with such another emphasis!  
Say, "the brave Antony."

**CHARMIAN**

The valiant Caesar!

**CLEOPATRA**

By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth  
If thou with Caesar paragon again  
75 My man of men.

**CHARMIAN**

By your most gracious  
pardon,  
I sing but after you.

**CLEOPATRA**

My salad days,  
When I was green in judgment, cold in blood,  
To say as I said then. *(to everyone)* But, come,  
away.  
*(to CHARMIAN)* Get me ink and paper.  
80 He shall have every day a several greeting,  
Or I'll unpeople Egypt.

*Exeunt*

*Enter POMPEY, MENECRATES, and MENAS, in  
warlike manner*

**POMPEY**

**CHARMIAN**

Oh, that splendid Caesar!

**CLEOPATRA**

May you choke on any other sentiments like that! Say, "That splendid Antony."

**CHARMIAN**

The courageous Caesar!

**CLEOPATRA**

By Isis, I'll give you bloody teeth if you ever compare Caesar with Antony, my best man among men.

**CHARMIAN**

Pardon me, but I'm just repeating what you yourself have said.

**CLEOPATRA**

That was when I was young and inexperienced and didn't know what passion was. *(to everyone)* But come. *(to  
CHARMIAN)* Go get me ink and paper. He shall have different messages every day if I have to depopulate Egypt  
to send them.

*They all exit.*

## Act 2 Scene 1

*POMPEY, MENECRATES, and MENAS enter, dressed for battle.*

**POMPEY**

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

**MENAS**

Know, worthy

Pompey,  
That what they do delay, they not deny.

**POMPEY**

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

**MENAS**

We, ignorant of  
ourselves,  
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.  
10 My powers are crescent, and my auguring  
hope  
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,  
15 Of both is flattered, but he neither loves,  
Nor either cares for him.

**MENAS**

If the great gods are just, they will help the most honest men.

**MENAS**

You should know, noble Pompey, that although the gods may delay action, that doesn't mean they will necessarily refuse their help.

**POMPEY**

But while we pray and wait for that help, the cause we petition for may be lost.

**MENAS**

Sometimes we don't know what's best for us and ask for things that may harm us. In that case, the wise gods deny our prayers for our own good.

**POMPEY**

I'll do well. The people are on my side, and I'm in charge of the sea. My forces are growing, and everything I know tells me it's all coming together. Mark Antony is at dinner in Egypt and won't be going outside to make war. Caesar loses supporters wherever he raises money. Lepidus flatters both of them, as they flatter him, but he doesn't love them, and they don't love him.

**MENAS**

Caesar and Lepidus are organizing their military operation. They have a massive army.

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

20 Looking for Antony. But all the charms of love,

Salt Cleopatra, soften thy wanned lip!

Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both.

Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,

Keep his brain fuming. Epicurean cooks,

25 Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,

That sleep and feeding may prorogue his

honor

Even till a Lethe'd dulness—

*Enter VARRIUS*

How now,

Varrius?

**VARRIUS**

This is most certain that I shall deliver:

Mark Antony is every hour in Rome

30 Expected. Since he went from Egypt 'tis

A space for farther travel.

**POMPEY**

**POMPEY**

Where did you hear this? It's not true.

**MENAS**

From Silvius, sir.

**POMPEY**

He's dreaming. I know they're in Rome together, hoping for Antony to return. Lecherous Cleopatra, may all the charms of love soften those withered lips! Join your witchcraft with your beauty, and let Antony's lust combine with both. Keep this libertine occupied with endless debauchery. Keep his brain drunk and his appetite unsatisfied, so that sleeping and eating make him drowsy and forgetful of his duties, like the [Lethe](#) does.

*VARRIUS enters.*

What's the news, Varrius?

**VARRIUS**

This news is absolutely true: Mark Antony is expected to arrive in Rome at any hour now. In the time since he left Egypt, he could have traveled an even longer distance.

**POMPEY**

I could have given less matter  
A better ear.—Menas, I did not think  
This amorous surfeiter would have donned  
his helm

35 For such a petty war. His soldiership  
Is twice the other twain. But let us rear  
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

40 Caesar and Antony shall well greet together.  
His wife that's dead did trespasses to Caesar.  
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.  
45 Were 't not that we stand up against them all,  
'Twere pregnant they should square between  
themselves,  
For they have entertainèd cause enough  
To draw their swords. But how the fear of us  
May cement their divisions and bind up  
50 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*

I would have listened to less important news with greater enthusiasm. Menas, I had no idea this amorous glutton would have put on his helmet for such an insignificant war. His military ability is double that of the other two. We must form a better opinion of ourselves if our uprising can pull the insatiable Antony's attention away from that Egyptian widow.

### MENAS

I don't expect Caesar and Antony will have a very friendly reunion. Antony's dead wife raised an army against him, as did his brother, though I don't think Antony instigated it.

### POMPEY

Menas, I don't understand how minor quarrels can be superseded by greater ones. If it weren't for the fact that we oppose all three of them together, they'd be fighting each other. They certainly have enough provocation. But it's possible the fear of us may mend their petty differences, though how that will work out, we cannot say. It will be as the gods see fit. In any case, our survival depends on putting together the strongest force possible. Let's go, Menas.

*They exit.*

## Act 2 Scene 2

Enter **ENOBARBUS** and **LEPIDUS**

**LEPIDUS**

Good Enobarbus, 'tis a worthy deed,  
And shall become you well, to entreat your  
captain  
To soft and gentle speech.

**ENOBARBUS**

I shall entreat him  
To answer like himself. If Caesar move him,  
5 Let Antony look over Caesar's head  
And speak as loud as Mars. By Jupiter,  
Were I the wearer of Antonio's beard,  
I would not shave 't today.

**LEPIDUS**

'Tis not a time for private stomaching.

**ENOBARBUS**

10 Every time serves for the matter that is then  
born in 't.

**LEPIDUS**

But small to greater matters must give way.

**ENOBARBUS**

Not if the small come first.

**LEPIDUS**

Your speech is passion. But pray you stir  
No embers up. Here comes the noble Antony.

Enter **ANTONY** and **VENTIDIUS**

**ENOBARBUS** and **LEPIDUS** enter.

**LEPIDUS**

Good Enobarbus, you would be doing a very good thing if you advised your captain to speak calmly and quietly.

**ENOBARBUS**

I will advise him to speak as he usually does. If Caesar makes him mad, let Antony stand tall and speak as loudly  
as Mars, the god of war. By Jupiter, if I were Antony, I wouldn't shave my beard today. I'd leave it long and dare  
Caesar to insult me by pulling on it, just so I could fight him.

**LEPIDUS**

This is not the time for dwelling on personal grievances.

**ENOBARBUS**

It's always appropriate to deal with matters as they arise.

**LEPIDUS**

But major issues must come before minor ones.

**ENOBARBUS**

Not if the minor ones come up first.

**LEPIDUS**

You speak out of passion, but I beg you not to stir things up. Here comes the noble Antony.

**ANTONY** and **VENTIDIUS** enter.

**ENOBARBUS**

15 And yonder, Caesar.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, MECAENAS, and AGRIPPA*

**ANTONY**

(to **VENTIDIUS** ) If we compose well here, to Parthia.

Hark, Ventidius.

*They talk aside*

**CAESAR**

(to **MECAENAS** ) I do not know, Maecenas. Ask Agrippa.

**LEPIDUS**

(to **CAESAR** and **ANTONY** ) Noble friends,  
20 That which combined us was most great, and let not

A leaner action rend us. What's amiss,  
May it be gently heard. When we debate  
Our trivial difference loud, we do commit  
Murder in healing wounds. Then, noble  
partners,

25 The rather for I earnestly beseech,  
Touch you the sourest points with sweetest  
terms,  
Nor curstness grow to th' matter.

**ANTONY**

'Tis  
spoken well.  
Were we before our armies, and to fight,

**ENOBARBUS**

And there comes Caesar.

*CAESAR, MAECENAS, and AGRIPPA enter from another door.*

**ANTONY**

(to **VENTIDIUS** ) If we can come to an agreement here, we'll move on to Parthia. Listen, Ventidius.

*They talk privately together.*

**CAESAR**

(to **MAECENAS** ) I don't know, Maecenas. Ask Agrippa.

**LEPIDUS**

(to **CAESAR** and **ANTONY** ) Good friends, the cause that joined us was noble. Don't let some petty quarrel tear us apart. Let's discuss this calmly. When we argue our differences with raised voices, we do more harm than good. So I plead with you to use reasonable words as you discuss these unreasonable deeds, and don't lose your tempers.

**ANTONY**

You're right. If we were in front of our armies, about to fight, I would do this.

I should do thus.

*Flourish*

**CAESAR**

30 Welcome to Rome.

**ANTONY**

Thank you.

**CAESAR**

Sit.

**ANTONY**

Sit, sir.

**CAESAR**

Nay, then.

*They sit*

**ANTONY**

35 I learn, you take things ill which are not so,  
Or being, concern you not.

**CAESAR**

I must be

laughed at

If or for nothing or a little, I

Should say myself offended, and with you

Chiefly i' th' world; more laughed at, that I

should

40 Once name you derogately, when to sound  
your name

It not concerned me.

*A trumpet fanfare.*

**CAESAR**

Welcome to Rome.

**ANTONY**

Thank you.

**CAESAR**

Have a seat.

**ANTONY**

After you.

**CAESAR**

No, after you.

*They sit.*

**ANTONY**

I hear you've interpreted some of my actions as being improper, when they weren't improper at all—or if they were, their impropriety didn't concern you.

**CAESAR**

I should be ridiculed if I were offended so easily—and laughed at even more for speaking of you disrespectfully, when I had no reason to speak of you at all.



**ANTONY**

My being in Egypt, Caesar, what was 't to you?

**CAESAR**

No more than my residing here at Rome

Might be to you in Egypt. Yet if you there

45 Did practice on my state, your being in Egypt

Might be my question.

**ANTONY**

How intend you,

"practiced"?

**CAESAR**

You may be pleased to catch at mine intent

By what did here befall me. Your wife and

brother

Made wars upon me, and their contestation

50 Was theme for you. You were the word of war.

**ANTONY**

You do mistake your business. My brother

never

Did urge me in his act. I did inquire it,

And have my learning from some true reports

That drew their swords with you. Did he not

rather

55 Discredit my authority with yours,

And make the wars alike against my stomach,

Having alike your cause? Of this my letters

Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,

As matter whole you have to make it with,

60 It must not be with this.

**CAESAR**

**ANTONY**

Caesar, what did my stay in Egypt have to do with you?

**CAESAR**

No more than my staying here in Rome might mean to you in Egypt. But if you conspired against my position

while you were there, I might be interested in the reason for your stay in Egypt.

**ANTONY**

How do you mean, "conspired"?

**CAESAR**

You can judge for yourself what I mean. Your wife and brother led troops against me, claiming to be fighting in

your name. They said they were acting for you.

**ANTONY**

You're mistaken. My brother didn't use my name to justify his rebellion. I talked to some reliable participants in

that battle. On the contrary, his fight was with both of us. He rejected my authority as much as yours. Since you

and I share a common cause, wouldn't his actions against you be hostile to me as well? I've already sent the

proof in my letters. If you want to pick a fight, you'll have to find a more substantial excuse.

**CAESAR**

You praise yourself

By laying defects of judgment to me, but

You patched up your excuses.

You defend yourself by blaming my judgment, but you're just making up feeble excuses.