

William Shakespeare Antony and Cleopatra



+ Sidney Lee

**The Classic Biography:
The Life of William Shakespeare**

William Shakespeare and Sidney Lee

Antony and Cleopatra (The Unabridged Play) + The Classic Biography: The Life of William Shakespeare

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

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ACT I.

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SCENE I. Alexandria. A Room in CLEOPATRA'S palace.

[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 glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,
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
To cool a gipsy's lust.

[Flourish within.]

Look where they come:

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

[Enter ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, with their trains;
Eunuchs fanning her.]

CLEOPATRA.

If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

ANTONY.

There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

CLEOPATRA.

I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.

ANTONY.

Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.
[Enter an Attendant.]

ATTENDANT.

News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANTONY.

Grates me:—the sum.

CLEOPATRA.

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;
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?
—

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-tongu'd Fulvia scolds.—The messengers!

ANTONY.

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
Of the rang'd 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 [Embracing]; when such a mutual pair
And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,
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 stirr'd by Cleopatra.—

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!

Whom everything becomes,—to chide, to laugh,

To weep; whose every passion fully strives

To make itself in thee fair and admir'd!

No messenger; but thine, and all alone

Tonight we'll wander through the streets and note

The qualities of people. Come, my queen;

Last night you did desire it:—speak not to us.

[Exeunt ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, with their Train.]

DEMETRIUS.

Is Caesar with Antonius priz'd so slight?

PHILO.

Sir, sometimes when he is not Antony,

He comes too short of that great property

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!

[Exeunt.]

**SCENE II. Alexandria. Another Room in CLEOPATRA'S
palace.**

[Enter CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, and a Soothsayer.]

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

ALEXAS.

Soothsayer,—

SOOTHSAYER.

Your will?

CHARMIAN.

Is this the man?—Is't you, sir, that know things?

SOOTHSAYER.

In nature's infinite book of secrecy

A little I can read.

ALEXAS.

Show him your hand.

[Enter ENOBARBUS.]

ENOBARBUS.

Bring in the banquet quickly; wine enough

Cleopatra's health to drink.

CHARMIAN.

Good, sir, give me good fortune.

SOOTHSAYER.

I make not, but foresee.

CHARMIAN.

Pray, then, foresee me one.

SOOTHSAYER.

You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

CHARMIAN.

He means in flesh.

IRAS.

No, you shall paint when you are old.

CHARMIAN.

Wrinkles forbid!

ALEXAS.

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. 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.

You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

CHARMIAN.

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

SOOTHSAYER.

You have seen and prov'd a fairer former fortune

Than that which is to approach.

CHARMIAN. Then belike my children shall have no names:—pr'ythee, 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.

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.

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.—Pr'ythee, tell
her but worky-day 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?

CHARMIAN. 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,—come, his fortune! his fortune!—O, 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, fiftyfold a cuckold! Good Isis, hear me this prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight; good Isis, I beseech thee!

IRAS. 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.

Amen.

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

ENOBARBUS.

Hush! Here comes Antony.

CHARMIAN.

Not he; the queen.

[Enter CLEOPATRA.]

CLEOPATRA.

Saw you my lord?

ENOBARBUS.

No, lady.

CLEOPATRA.

Was he not here?

CHARMIAN.

No, madam.

CLEOPATRA.

He was dispos'd to mirth; but on the sudden

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.

CLEOPATRA.

We will not look upon him: go with us.

[Exeunt CLEOPATRA, ENOBARBUS, CHAR., IRAS, ALEX.,
and

Soothsayer.]

[Enter ANTONY, with a MESSENGER and Attendants.]

MESSENGER.

Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

ANTONY.

Against my brother Lucius.

MESSENGER.

Ay:

But soon that war had end, and the time's state
Made friends of them, jointing their force 'gainst Caesar;
Whose better issue in the war, from Italy
Upon the first encounter, drave them.

ANTONY.

Well, what worst?

MESSENGER.

The nature of bad news infects the teller.

ANTONY.

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 flatter'd.

MESSENGER.

Labienus,—

This is stiff news,—hath, with his Parthian force,
Extended Asia from Euphrates;

His conquering banner shook from Syria
To Lydia and to Ionia;
Whilst,—

ANTONY.

Antony, thou wouldst say,—

MESSENGER.

O, my lord!

ANTONY.

Speak to me home, mince not the general tongue:
Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome;
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase; and taunt my faults
With such full licence as both truth and malice
Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds
When our quick minds lie still; and our ills told us
Is as our earring. Fare thee well awhile.

MESSENGER.

At your noble pleasure.

[Exit.]

ANTONY.

From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there!

FIRST ATTENDANT.

The man from Sicyon—is there such an one?

SECOND ATTENDANT.

He stays upon your will.

ANTONY.

Let him appear.—

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

[Enter another MESSENGER.]

What are you?

SECOND MESSENGER.

Fulvia thy wife is dead.

ANTONY.

Where died she?

SECOND MESSENGER.

In Sicyon:

Her length of sickness, with what else more serious
Importeth thee to know, this bears. [Gives a letter.]

ANTONY.

Forbear me.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

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,
By revolution lowering, does become
The opposite of itself: she's good, being gone;
The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on.
I must from this enchanting queen break off:
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch—ho, Enobarbus!
[Re-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.

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. 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 blest withal would have discredited your travel.

ANTONY.

Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS.

Sir?

ANTONY.

Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS.

Fulvia?

ANTONY.

Dead.

ENOBARBUS. 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 crown'd 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
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.

No more light answers. Let our officers
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
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 link'd to the deserver
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,
The sides o' the 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.

I shall do't.

[Exeunt.]

**SCENE III. Alexandria. A Room in CLEOPATRA'S
palace.**

[Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS.]

CLEOPATRA.

Where is he?

CHARMIAN.

I did not see him since.

CLEOPATRA.

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

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.

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.

But here comes Antony.

[Enter ANTONY.]

CLEOPATRA.

I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY.

I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose,—

CLEOPATRA.

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.

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,—

CLEOPATRA.

O, never was there queen

So mightily betray'd! 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 throned gods,

Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,

To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,

Which break themselves in swearing!

ANTONY.

Most sweet queen,—

CLEOPATRA.

Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,

But bid farewell, and go: when you sh'ld staying,
Then was the time for words: no going then;—
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,
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

ANTONY.

How now, lady!

CLEOPATRA.

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
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 condemn'd Pompey,
Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace
Into the hearts of such as have not thriv'd
Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;
And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge
By any desperate change. My more particular,
And that which most with you should save my going,
Is Fulvia's death.

CLEOPATRA.

Though age from folly could not give me freedom,
It does from childishness:—can Fulvia die?

ANTONY.

She's dead, my queen.

Look here, and, at thy sovereign leisure, read
The garboils she awak'd; 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,
In Fulvia's death how mine receiv'd shall be.

ANTONY.

Quarrel no more, but be prepar'd to know
The purposes I bear; which are, or cease,
As you shall give the advice. By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war
As thou affect'st.

CLEOPATRA.

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

ANTONY.

My precious queen, forbear;
And give true evidence to his love, which stands
An honourable trial.

CLEOPATRA.

So Fulvia told me.

I prythee, turn aside and weep for her;
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 honour.

ANTONY.

You'll heat my blood: no more.

CLEOPATRA.

You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

ANTONY.

Now, by my sword,—

CLEOPATRA.

And target.—Still he mends;

But this is not the best:—look, pr'ythee, Charmian,
How this Herculean Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe.

ANTONY.

I'll leave you, lady.

CLEOPATRA.

Courteous lord, one word.

Sir, you and I must part,—but that's not it;

Sir, you and I have lov'd,—but there's not it;

That you know well: something it is I would,—

O, my oblivion is a very Antony,

And I am all forgotten.

ANTONY.

But that your royalty

Holds idleness your subject, I should take you

For idleness itself.

CLEOPATRA.

'Tis sweating labour

To bear such idleness so near the heart

As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me;

Since my becoming kill me, when they do not

Eye well to you: your honour 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

Be strew'd 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.]

SCENE IV. Rome. An Apartment in CAESAR'S House.

[Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, LEPIDUS, and Attendants.]

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
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
Vouchsaf'd to think he had partners: you shall find there
A man who is the abstract of all faults
That all men follow.

LEPIDUS.

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

CAESAR.

You are too indulgent. Let's grant it is not
Amisss 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;
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
So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd
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

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 a Messenger.]

LEPIDUS.

Here's more news.

MESSENGER.

Thy biddings have been done; and every hour,
Most noble Caesar, shalt thou have report
How 'tis abroad. Pompey is strong at sea;
And it appears he is belov'd of those
That only have fear'd Caesar: to the ports
The discontents repair, and men's reports
Give him much wrong'd.

CAESAR.

I should have known no less:

It hath been taught us from the primal state
That he which is was wish'd until he were;
And the ebb'd man, ne'er lov'd till ne'er worth love,
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,
To rot itself with motion.

MESSENGER.

Caesar, I bring thee word
Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,
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
Taken as seen; for Pompey's name strikes more
Than could his war resisted.

CAESAR.

Antony,
Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
Was beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
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
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou browsed'st; on the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on: and all this,—
It wounds thine honour that I speak it now,—
Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek
So much as lank'd not.

LEPIDUS.

'Tis pity of him.

CAESAR.

Let his shames quickly
Drive him to Rome; 'tis time we twain
Did show ourselves i' the field; and to that end
Assemble we immediate council: Pompey
Thrives in our idleness.

LEPIDUS.

Tomorrow, Caesar,
I shall be furnish'd to inform you rightly
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,

To let me be partaker.
CAESAR.
Doubt not, sir;
I knew it for my bond.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. Alexandria. A Room in the Palace.

[Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN.]

CLEOPATRA.

Charmian,—

CHARMIAN.

Madam?

CLEOPATRA.

Ha, ha!—

Give me to drink mandragora.

CHARMIAN.

Why, madam?

CLEOPATRA.

That I might sleep out this great gap of time

My Antony is away.

CHARMIAN.

You think of him too much.

CLEOPATRA.

O, 'tis treason!

CHARMIAN.

Madam, I trust, not so.

CLEOPATRA.

Thou, eunuch Mardian!

MARDIAN.

What's your highness' pleasure?

CLEOPATRA.

Not now to hear thee sing; I take no pleasure

In aught an eunuch has; 'tis well for thee

That, being unseminar'd, thy freer thoughts
May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou affections?
MARDIAN.

Yes, gracious 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,

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
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,
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
With looking on his life.

[Enter ALEXAS.]

ALEXAS.

Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

CLEOPATRA.

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

With his tinct gilded thee.—

How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

ALEXAS.

Last thing he did, dear queen,

He kiss'd,—the last of many doubled kisses,—

This orient pearl: his speech sticks in my heart.

CLEOPATRA.

Mine ear must pluck it thence.

ALEXAS.

'Good friend,' quoth he

'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,

And soberly did mount an arm-girt steed,

Who neigh'd so high that what I would have spoke

Was beastly dumb'd by him.

CLEOPATRA.

What, was he sad or merry?

ALEXAS.

Like to the time o' the year between the extremes

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,—

Which seem'd 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.

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,

Ever love Caesar so?

CHARMIAN.

O that brave Caesar!

CLEOPATRA.

Be chok'd 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

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!—But come, away;

Get me ink and paper: he shall have every day

A several greeting,

Or I'll unpeople Egypt.

[Exeunt.]