

Act 3, Scene 13

Summary:

Cleopatra and her servants discuss their plight. Enobarbus states that Antony was at fault but mainly because his love for Cleopatra clouded his judgement. Antony and Euphronius enter, Euphronius repeats the news to Cleopatra. Antony is insulted by Caesar's behaviour in trying to persuade Cleopatra away. Antony states if it was a man on man match, he would win. Enobarbus believes this reflects Antony's naïve and bad judgement.

A servant enters to tell Cleopatra that a messenger from Caesar has arrived. The messenger is Thyreus, who tries to gain Cleopatra's confidence, while actually promising nothing. He urges her to trust Caesar and insinuates that everyone believes she is forced to stay with Antony. Cleopatra appears to agree with what Thyreus says, and Enobarbus leaves convinced no one is loyal to Antony. Thyreus kneels to kiss her hand just as Antony and Enobarbus enter. The gesture is out of respect, but bad timing. Antony is outraged and orders Thyreus to be whipped. He turns on Cleopatra and exclaims she is unfaithful. The servants re-enter with Thyreus, and Antony sends him back to Caesar. He says if doesn't like Thyreus's treatment, he can do as he likes with his hostage Hipparchus who disloyal to Antony.

Cleopatra pretends she loves Antony and it was all an act and Antony believes her. He vows to fight Caesar to the end. Antony and Cleopatra leave to celebrate her birthday. Enobarbus is left commenting on Antony's loss of judgment. At the height of his disappointment with Antony, Enobarbus finally decides that he must desert Antony if possible.

- "He is a god, and knows what is most right. Mine honour was not yet yielded, but conquered merely." "I kiss his conqu'ring hand." → Cleopatra appears sly & selfish, glorifying Caesar to survive and fulfil her desires. However, she remains loyal to Antony portraying her devious yet brave personality traits. She realises Antony is doomed but stays with him in this scene perhaps out of generosity or love.
- "Whip him! ... Till ... Whine aloud for mercy." → Antony is merciless and fails to see the servant is not trying to seduce Cleopatra. Here the build-up of defeat is amplifying in Antony's mind, continuing to cloud his judgement.